

Un mauvais garde-chiourme

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Abstract. *New reading of two memoranda from Mari (A.1994 [ARMT XXIII] and A.1401) that shed light on the dark reality of ergastula in Antiquity.*

Parmi les mémorandums édités il y a plus de 30 ans par Francis Joannès¹, deux (ici **A** & **B**) se distinguent par leur net caractère de documents juridiques. Ce sont en fait, plus que des mémorandums, des actes d'accusations portées l'an du recensement de Zimrî-Lîm à l'encontre d'Eštar-kabar (et éventuellement de son épouse) par une série de fonctionnaires mariotes qui lui reprochaient apparemment d'avoir mal géré les ergastules qui lui étaient confiés ou d'y avoir cherché un profit personnel.

Dans le premier (**A**), il est, en effet, accusé d'avoir laissé mourir de faim des prisonniers (dont il avait dû s'approprier les portions alimentaires), voire d'avoir vendu certains de ceux qui étaient commis à sa garde. Pour faire bonne mesure, il devait également, selon l'un des documents (**A**), répondre d'avoir facilité par l'entremise de son épouse une affaire d'adultère ainsi que d'avoir trahi ce que l'on considérait alors comme des secrets d'État.

— Les gens qui sont morts, alors qu'ils étaient sous sa garde, n'étaient cependant pas des personnes du commun. On y trouve un ancien haut administrateur du RHM dont nous apprenons

¹ *Archives Administratives de Mari I* = ARMT XXIII, ERC, Paris 1984, 93 = **A.1994** et « Nouveaux mémorandums », dans *Miscellanea Babylonica, Mélanges offerts à Maurice Birot*, ERC, 1985, 102 = **A.1401**. Ces textes, qui ont malheureusement peu attiré l'attention, méritent aujourd'hui d'être repris à frais nouveaux, à la fois grâce aux excellentes copies faites alors par F. Joannès, mais aussi grâce à un jeu de photographies prises par l'équipe des épigraphistes de Mari. Merci à D. Charpin pour son aide à récupérer les photographies de A.1401. Malheureusement, de telles photographies n'existent pas pour le texte de ARMT XXIII.

ainsi la triste fin (A : 1-3) ; le frère du roi Šarrum-kîma-kali.ma dont la royauté n'a de fait pas beaucoup duré (A : 8) ; quelqu'un qui avait participé au sac de Samânum et qui, vu le butin qui avait été le sien, ne devait pas être n'importe qui (A : 9-10) ; Iškur-gugal (A : 4), enfin, qui, vu son nom sumérien, pouvait avoir été un scribe². En ce qui concerne la l. 7, la lecture du NP est incertaine, mais il devait s'agir d'un artisan important du Palais. Ces gens avaient été amenés aux ergastules par décision d'autorités mariotes bien connues, sans doute énumérées ensuite sous la rubrique gîr.

— Les ventes de personne opérées par le fonctionnaire indélicat concernent un tout autre personnel : deux femmes, dont l'une (A : 13) devait être non-mariée, et un jeune enfant. Le fait que les pères soient mentionnés pour deux d'entre eux devrait indiquer qu'il s'agissait de gens libres mis aux ergastules pour des raisons qui tenaient à ce que leurs géniteurs avaient fait et qui, vu leur condition personnelle, n'auraient jamais dû être vendus.

— L'accusation d'avoir montré à un devin des réponses oraculaires (*têrêtum*) était grave, car cela contrevenait au secret qui entourait le verdict ominal³. La traduction de F. J. « au sujet des présages que l'on a montrés au devin » est grammaticalement possible, mais ne fait pas beaucoup de sens, car rien n'indique qui pourrait être ce « on ». Les *nêpârûm* étaient un lieu très sensible car les gens qui y étaient, n'ayant désormais que peu d'espérances, étaient prêts à tout. C'était aussi un endroit où étaient transformés les produits (d'où la traduction « ateliers ») et qui semble avoir fait souvent l'objet de coup de mains d'ennemis⁴. Laisser voir à un devin, sans doute pour lui en demander le sens, des présages qui ne pouvaient concerner que le *nêpârûm*, était divulguer des informations dangereuses.

² Dans ARMT XIII 1 iv 58 = MARI 8, ERC, 1997, 606, il s'agit néanmoins d'un tisserand.

³ Pour ce fait, cf. ARMT XXVI/1, 21.

⁴ Cf. CAD N/2, s. v. **nupāru**.

1. A.1401⁵

- ¹ *ú-ma-an-ni-su-uṭ-ṭà*
 2 *i-na ta-pa-š_i ba-ug₇*
 a-wa-at kù-UD-šu a-na hu-sà-nim na-di-in
 4 1 ^d *iškur-gu°-gal lú bi-id-da-ah^{ki}*
 mu-tù su°-mu-ha-du-ú
 6 *i-na te-nim ù bu-bu-tim ba-ug₇*
 1 *úš-tap-¹a¹-da-an ìr é-kál-lim*
 8 1 *ig*-mil-^dutu šeš lugal-ki-ma¹-ka-li-ma¹*
 1 lú še₂₀-eh-ri-[y]u^{ki} ša ka-ta-pa-am
 10 *ša sa-am-si-^dIM i-na qa-ti-šu iṣ-ba-tu*
 4 lú-meš *i-na bu-bu-tim ba-ug₇*
 12 I ^f *ka-ni-sa*
 I ^f *ha-lu-un-na dumu-munus a-iu-ma-^dIM*
 14 1 ¹lú-tur¹ dumu a-ra-am-[mu]
 Tr? *ša a-na kù-UD id-d[i-nu]*
 16 2 munus-meš 1 lú-tur ìr é-kál-lim
 [im-tú]-¹ú¹-um
 Rev. 18 *aš-šu[m g a-wi-¹]u-tim*
 š[a] ¹ni¹-[id]-¹di¹-na-am i-na ne-pa-ri-im ¹ú¹-[ul i-ba-šu]
 20 *aš-šum munus-dam mu-ut-°e-bi-ih*
 ša dam eš₄-tár-ka-bar a-na ia-ar-ka-ab-li-im
 22 *ú-še-ri-bu-ši munus ša-a-ti ia-ar-ka-ab-li-im ah[?]-zu[?]*
 aš-šum te-re-tim ša a-na máš-šu-gíd-gíd
 24 *ú-ka-al-li-mu*
 (1 l. blanche.)
 an-nu-ú-um ša igi ^di-túr-me-er
 26 *eš₄-tár-ka-bar i-na ne-pa-ri-im*
 ú-ki-id-du
 28 *gìr aq-ba-a-hi-im*
 i-din-^dnu-muš-da
 30 *ka-a-la-an ¹su-mu-[ha-du-ú]*
 bu-nu-ma-^dI[M] da[m-gàr]

⁵ Les points de divergence d'avec l'édition de F. J. sont marqués par un * dans le cas d'une lecture matérielle différente et par souligné en cas de changement de la transcription.

32 [*mu-k*]a°-ni-ši-im
 [*ia-s*]i-[*im-sú-mu-ú*]
 34 [ù]
 Tr. iti [*ki-nu-ni*]m* [_{u4} x-kam]
 36 mu zi-[*im-ri-li*]-im
 m-as-sú ú-ub-bi-bu

Umanni-suṭṭâ est mort en captivité^{a)} ; affaire de son argent : « il a été donné à Huṣānum^{b)} ».

(a) Iškur-gugal, homme de Bindah, qu'avait fait entrer (en prison) Sumu-hadû : il est mort de soif^{c)} et de faim ;

(b) Uṣtapdan^{d)}, serviteur du Palais ;

(c) Igmil-Šamaš, frère de Šarrum-kîma-kalî.ma^{e)} ;

(d) 1 homme de Šehrum que l'on avait trouvé en possession de la hache-ansée^{f)} de Samsî-Addu ;

(soit) 4 personnes mortes de faim.

(a) La femme Kanisa,

(b) la femme Halun-na^{g)}, fille d'Ayyû.ma-Addu,

(c) le jeune enfant, fils d'Arammu^{h)},

qu'il a vendusⁱ⁾ :

(soit) 2 femmes, 1 enfant, serviteur(s) du Palais : (représentant) un manque^{j)}.

— Vu que les serviteurs que nous avons livrés^{k)} manquent dans le nê-pârum ;

— vu que l'épouse de Mut-Ebih^{l)} à qui l'épouse d'Eštar-kabar a ménagé une entrevue avec Yarkab-Lîm, Yarkab-Lîm se trouve la posséder,

— vu qu'il a montré les réponses oraculaires qui étaient pour le devin^{m)},

voilà ce dont, par devant Itûr-Mêr, ils ont accusé Eštar-kabarⁿ⁾ dans le nêpârum.

Intermédiaire d'Aqba-Ahum,

d'Idin-Numušda

de Ka'lalum, Sumu-hadû^{o)}

de Bunû.ma-Addu, le marchand^{p)},

de Mukannišum

de Yasîm-sumu

et de

mois VII (?), le ...

Année du recensement.

a) Le CAD T enregistre le passage s. v. **tapālu** sans donner de sens au terme, ce qui est reprendre purement et simplement l'édition de Francis Joannès, qui considérerait apparemment qu'il s'agissait d'une maladie ; W. von Soden avait cependant posé l'existence, *UF* 13, 1981, p. 164, d'un verbe *tapāšum* « garder en prison » correspondant à l'hébreu *tpś* « er-greiffer » (cf. *AHW*, p. 1320b), ce que ne reprend pas le CAD T, p. 178b. Ce sens convient néanmoins très bien ici et *tapāšum* (sans doute un infinitif G) signifierait « captivité, emprisonnement » plutôt que « prison », dont l'équivalent akkadien est *bīt šibittim*.

Dans *OECT* 3 83: 35, cependant, l'existence d'un verbe *tuppušum* me paraît fort douteuse. Je comprendrais effectivement, malgré W. von Soden et les hésitations de F. Kraus (*AbB* 4 161, sans traduction) *mi-im-mu-ú-a a-na-di-im-ma, ú-ta-pa-aš-ma a-pa-al-ka* par « Je vendrai tout ce que j'ai et, mes comptes faits, je te paierai. » Plutôt qu'un verbe *tuppušum* (qui n'existe pas, au moins ici), on verra ici une forme de *uppušum*, dont le sens de « calculer » est désormais bien attesté ; cf. *LAPO* 17, p. 599.

b) Comme l'a bien vu F. J., il y a deux affaires différentes ici : le fait que l'individu meurre dans la prison, la question de l'argent qu'on aurait dû trouver et qui aurait été donné à un certain *Hušanum* (*Hussân* ?), peut-être le charpentier mentionné par *ARM* XIV 47 = *LAPO* 17 654. La seconde partie peut représenter ce qu'a donné comme explication *Eštar-kabar*.

c) CAD T, p. 344b a enregistré le mot sans explication, s. v. **tênu**. Le parallèle de M.7389 (= *FM* II, p. 95) Rev. 2'-3' où on lira [*be-lí a-na b*] *a-ah-di-li-im li-[iš-pu-ur-ma]*, [*i-na t*] *e-ni-im la úš-ma-at-t[a-ni]* montre que ce terme signifie « disette d'eau » pour un champ. De fait dans la prison les gens sont dits mourir de faim et de soif. Dans les textes akkadiens, c'est *šûmûm*, la « soif », qui est le pendant naturel de *bûbûtum* « faim » comme cause de la mort. On voit ainsi dans *ASKT* p. 88-89 la phrase *ina šûmê* (« *šummê* », CAD) *u šibitti* permuter avec *ina bûbûti u šibitti*. Un sens donc de « soif », « manque » pour *tênum* semble devoir être retenu, même si l'étymologie du terme me reste obscure. Il peut s'agir d'un terme local.

d) Un NP Haldân n'existe pas dans nos index, et ni la copie de F. J. ni la photo ne permettent d'ailleurs une lecture *ha-al-* pour l'initiale de ce NP. Un dieu Haldi- existe, dès l'époque amorrite (cf. les NP Haldu-muluk [OLA 162/1, p. 314] et *ha-al-da-ak-k[u-...]*) mais je ne connais pas de NP qui soit une suffixation en *-ân* sur un nom divin.

Matériellement, il me semble lire *úš-tab-ṛa¹-da-an*, qui pourrait être une variante de *úš-tab-a-dal*, un spécialiste en étoffe de ARMT XIII 1 iv 20 = MARI 8 p. 605, mais il faudrait supposer une alternance n/l dans ce NP, bien connue par ailleurs.

e) Une lecture Rîš-Šamaš (F. J.) aurait bien sûr de nombreux parallèles, mais le premier signe du NP me paraît sur la photo être plutôt un IG qu'un RI.

La lecture de la fin de la ligne supprime toute allusion à un « frère du roi », inconnu partout ailleurs. Il n'en reste pas moins que Šarrum-kîma-kali.ma est le nom du roi de Razamâ du Yamutbâl, pour les attestations duquel on se reportera à FM V index, p. 285. Mais un Šarrum-kîma-kali.ma (avant d'être roi de Razamâ ?) est également mentionné à la fin du règne de Yasmah-Addu par MARI 3, n°124 lorsque Yasmah-Addu va à Ekallâtum. Il pourrait donc s'agir d'un Ekallatéen mis en prison au moment de la chute du RHM.

f) L'arme dite *katappum* (une sorte de hache ansée) semble avoir été le signe distinctif des chefs mâr yamîna. Il s'agit effectivement ici du chef de Samânûm, non du grand roi d'Ekallâtum.

g) Ce NP a été catalogué comme « hourrite » (avec la traduction « Trage ihn/sie fort » par Th. Richter, *Vorarbeiten zu einem hurritischen Namenbuch* 1, p. 120, ce qui est très peu vraisemblable, car il s'agit d'un NP ouest-sémitique (cf. d'ailleurs le NP de la mère).

h) L'écriture *a-ra-am-mu* avec une géminée au lieu de l'Aramu de ARMT XVI/1, p. 66 est désormais très bien établie par des variantes de TEM-3. C'est un NP bédouin mâr sim'al.

i) F. J. a compris « que l'on a vendu », portant sur le dernier NP. Cette compréhension est possible, mais il est nécessaire de trouver ici une accusation contre Eštar-kabar.

j) Le CAD ne connaît ce sens que dans les textes hépatoscopiques ; on le trouve cependant dans ARMT XXII 203' i, 47 où il reprend *mu-uṭ-ṭú-ú* de la l. 43.

k) Pour l'emploi de NDN « livrer quelqu'un à une autorité » cf. ARMT XXVI/2 491: 33, d'où la correction dans le texte suivant, B l. 3.

l) Pour *mu-tu-e-bi-ih*, cf. *mu-tu-^dEN.TI*, A.1045 = XXIII 625. Un Mut-Ebih est mentionné comme un homme de Tuttul.

m) F. J. a compris: « au sujet des présages que l'on a montrés au devin », ce qui est possible, mais ne saurait être mis au débit d'Eštar-kabar.

n) Il existe à Mari un verbe *kadûm* qui signifie « prendre quelqu'un sous sa garantie ». C'est l'acte de la *kidûtum*, surtout connue pour s'appliquer à de jeunes enfants à qui on veut assurer une protection et auquel on peut rattacher le terme *kadûm*, signifiant apparemment « juge », qui pouvait être le terme amorrite correspondant à l'akkadien *dayyânum* (cf. *LAP0* 17, p. 495-496). Le verbe *kadûm* devrait donc signifier « être garant de la sécurité de quelqu'un », « porter la responsabilité de quelqu'un ». La forme D, *kuddûm*, signifierait donc « assurer l'entière responsabilité de quelque chose/quelqu'un ».

Cependant la forme *û-KI-id-du* ne peut être que l'accompli D d'une racine concave, ce qui ne correspond pas à un verbe *kadûm*, mais *kâdum*. CAD K, p. 493 traduit *kuddum* par « to watch out », *AHw*, p. 420a « haftbar machen », donc « faire attention ». La traduction de F. Joannès « rendre responsable » correspond à celle du *AHw*, qui ne convient pas aux exemples de Tell Harmal, où *kuddum* signifie « faire attention ».

Le sens contextuel ici est soit d'accuser quelqu'un, soit (moins vraisemblablement) de l'empêcher de poursuivre ses agissements. On aurait attendu *ukinnû*.

o) Il n'y a aucune raison de restituer ici Sumu-yasîm, alors que Sumu-hadû est explicitement dit avoir fait entrer au *nêpârum* Iškur-gugal. Bindah/Biddah est dans le district de Saggâratum, où Sumu-hadû est, effectivement, très présent. On remarque qu'il y a dans ce texte huit gîr, donc autant que de gens disparus. Il est vraisemblable que chacun des gîr devait témoigner qu'il avait amené à l'ergastule la personne déclarée manquante.

p) Le IM est nettement visible puis, bien distinct sur la droite, un signe MÍ qui doit être un début de DAM.

2. ARMT XXIII 93⁶ (B)

Dans ce second texte, qui doit être d'à peu près la même date que le précédent, Eštar-kabar doit faire face à trois chefs d'accusation qui peuvent, tous, traiter d'affaires d'argent. Le présent acte d'accusation se distinguerait donc du premier (A) qui ne concernait que des questions de personnes.

— Le premier chef parle d'un certain Usalli-Šamaš, que Mâšia avait déjà jugé. L'inédit A.4360, texte acéphale et fragmentaire mais sûrement d'un administratif de Zimrî-Lîm, parle d'une somme d'argent confiée à un certain *ú-se-el-li-a-na*^{dutu}⁷, compère d'un Mutêrah, à Andarig, avec de grands délais de transmission. Il pourrait s'agir ici de cette affaire, qui aurait entraîné un procès à Mari.

— Les « 6 enfants » de Yahdun-Lîm peuvent représenter des ex-votos à fabriquer pour lesquels de l'argent avait été donné mais avait apparemment disparu. La confection de la représentation était sans doute le fait du nouveau roi. Comme il était normal sur un ex-voto d'avoir non seulement des représentations humaines mais aussi des objets divers⁸, cela expliquerait la mention du *bibbum* en lazulite de la l. 5. Il est vraisemblable que l'argent fourni par les marchands et par Yarkab-Lîm devait compléter (ou fournir) le métal nécessaire pour un tel travail. Tout l'argent qui est ici énuméré aurait donc disparu. Le *nêpârûm* était de fait un lieu de transformation des matières premières et il est vraisemblable que c'est dans ces ateliers du Palais que devait être produite la représentation des « 6 fils » de Yahdun-Lîm.

— La troisième affaire concerne le témoignage non obtenu de 15 personnes d'Imâr. Il est possible que cela ait également concerné des affaires d'argent, s'il s'agit, comme c'est vraisemblable, de gens en déplacement d'affaire.

⁶ On trouve une copie de ce texte dans F. Joannès, « Copies cunéiformes d'ARMT XXXIII-2 », *MARI* 5, 1987, 349.

⁷ Le verbe *sullûm* se construit soit directement, soit par le recours à *ana*.

⁸ Cf. un travail en cours de M. Guichard sur les représentations figurées à Mari.

- aš-šum ú-sà-al-li-^d[utu]
 2 ni-iš AN-lim i-za-ka-ar
 ma-ši-ia-ma lu-ú id-di-in⁹
 4 aš-šum kù-babar 6 dumu-meš ia-ah-du-li-im
 aš-šum kù-babar ù bi-ib-[bi-i]m* ša na₄ za-gìn
 6 ša mu-na-wi-rum* [iq-b]é*-e-em
 aš-šum 5/6 ma-na [kù-UD] ša dam-gàr-meš
 8 aš-šum 2/3 ma-na kù-UD
 ša ia-ar-ka-ab-li-im
 10 ša ^fra-ba-tum
 a-na eš₄-tár-ka-bar
 12 ub-la-am
 aš-šum 15 lú-meš ṛi-ma-ar^{ki10}
 14 ša eš₄-tár-ka-bar la ú-ki-nu
 a-na an-ni-i-im
 16 eš₄-tár-ka-bar ni-iš AN-lim
 i-za-ka- ar
 18 iti ki-nu-nim
 u₄ 9-[kam]
 20 mu zi-im-ri-li-[im]
 ma-as-sú ú-ub-bi-bu

(a) Au sujet d'Usalli-Šamas il prêtera serment. C'est Māšiya lui-même qui avait porté jugement^a).

(b) Au sujet de l'argent des six enfants de Yahdun-Lîm^b) ; au sujet de l'argent et d'un(e représentation de) *bibbum*^c) en lazzulite dont a parlé^d) Munawwirum ; au sujet des 5/6 de mine d'argent des marchands ; au sujet des 2/3 de mine d'argent de Yarkab-Lîm, que dame Rabbatum avait apportés à Eštar-kabar ;

(c) au sujet des 15 gens d'Imar qui n'ont pas confirmé (les dires d')Eštar-kabar^e) ;

⁹ G. Dossin a lu *id-di*-[...], montrant que le dernier signe a été brisé.

¹⁰ Suivant une proposition de M. Guichard qui correspond bien aux traces dessinées par F. Joannès ; G. Dossin avait lu : [*na-h*]u²-ur^{ki}, ce qui ne correspond que peu aux dossiers historiques concernant cette ville (M. G.).

pour (tout) cela, Eštar-kabar prêtera serment.

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a) F. Joannès a lu *lu-ú id-di* et traduit « il est au courant », mais le verbe *idû* ne distingue pas accompli et inaccompli. La forme devrait donc venir de ND', qui serait difficile à expliquer ici, d'où la correction, peut-être inutile si le IN était sur le côté disparu de la tablette. Il est probable qu'il s'agit ici du verbe *diânum* « juger » au parfait, plutôt que du prétérit de NDN. Mais il n'y a pas d'attestation nette de Mâšiya, juge, à l'époque de Zimrî-Lîm, car l'attestation de ce nom dans ARM VIII 92 n'est pas claire.

b) F. J. a corrigé le texte en « Dûr » Yahdun-Lîm, mais sans raison contraignante. D'autres textes nous parlent effectivement des nombreux enfants de Yahdun-Lîm.

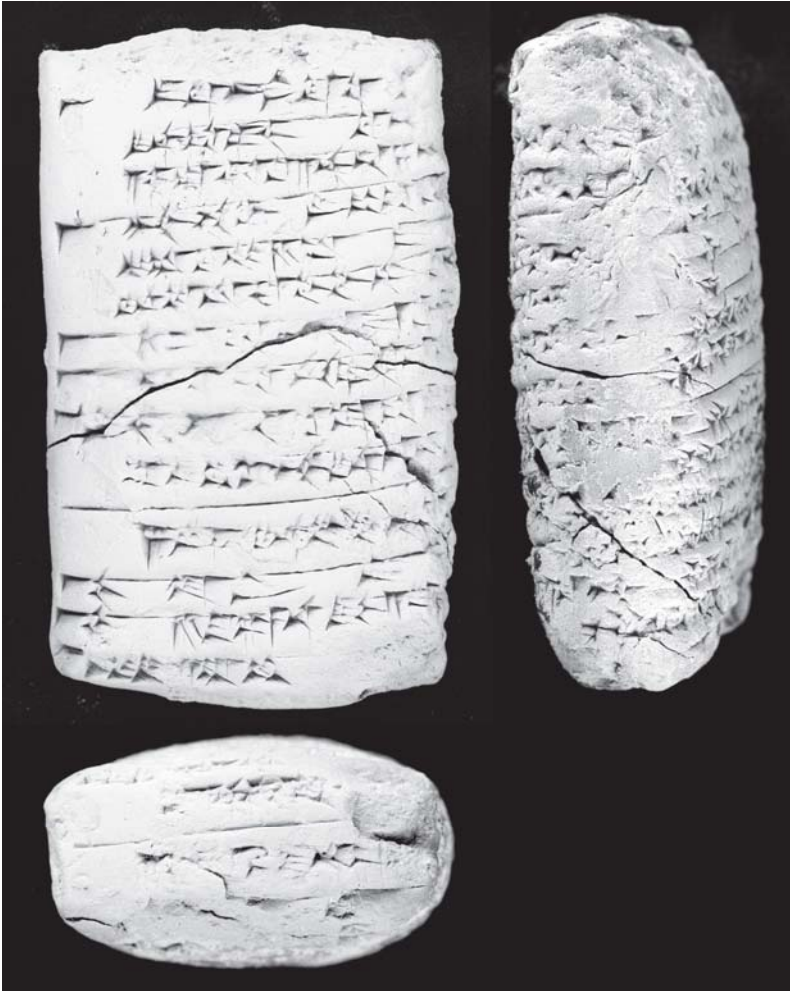
c) Le texte est cité par CAD U, p. 199a, tel qu'il a été édité ; on voit encore sur la copie le IM final. Le sens est néanmoins difficile à établir : il pourrait s'agir d'une représentation de canard-*bibbum* mais un texte OB inédit atteste des représentations solaires et lunaires, avant des *bibbum*, qui pourraient dès lors être des symboles stellaires.

d) L. 6 : la copie de F. J. ne favorise nullement une lecture KI pour le signe brisé devant le *-e-em*, et on voit encore un très clair B]I. Une forme de *qabûm* « dire » doit renvoyer à une accusation portée par Munawwirum (le scribe ?) à l'encontre d'Eštar-kabar. De même la copie favorise plus une lecture *mu-na-wi-rum* que *mu-na-wi-r[i-im...]* que propose F. J.

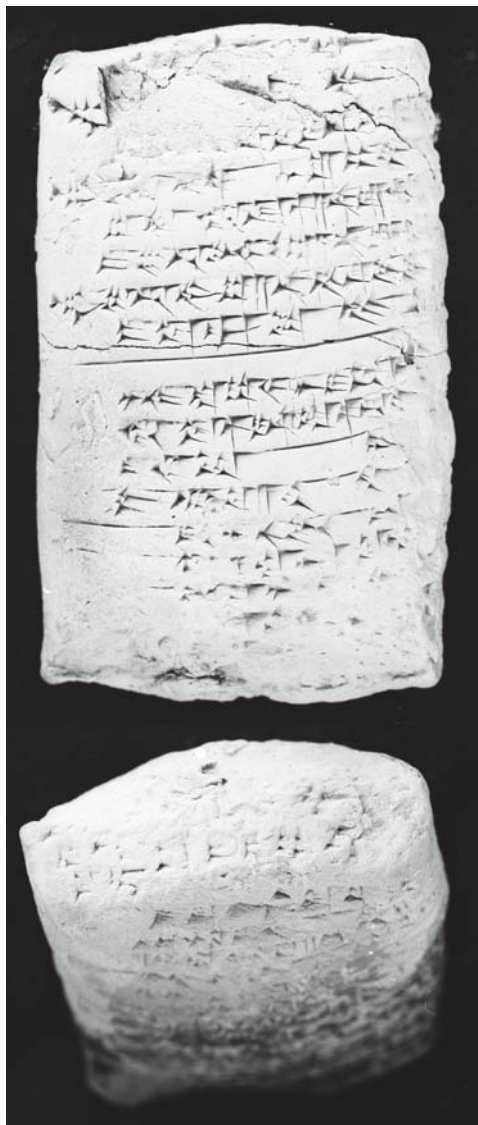
e) Il doit encore s'agir d'une affaire d'argent et de marchands d'Imâr.

Il est vraisemblable qu'avec ces deux pièces on n'a qu'un aperçu fragmentaire des problèmes judiciaires qu'a dû avoir Eštar-kabar, qu'il faut tenir, avec F. Joannès, pour le responsable des *nêpâratum*. Rien ne nous renseigne sur le dénouement de l'histoire, qui a dû faire l'objet d'un verdict royal.

Il reste, naturellement, à savoir qui a bien pu être ce Yarkab-Lîm, un mâr sim'al de rang important à en juger d'après son nom (« La tribu l'a emporté »), assez riche pour qu'Eštar-kabar se soit montré plein de complaisance envers lui et qui pouvait faire porter au garde-chiourme 2/3 de mine d'argent, soit 40 sicles, l'équivalent de 40 moutons ou de 4 bœufs.



A.1401 (face)



A.1401 (revers)

Guerre et diplomatie : Lettres d'Iluni roi d'Ešnunna d'une collection privée

Michaël Guichard

EPHE (Paris)

Abstract. *The reign of Iluni king of Ešnunna, who was contemporary of Samsu-iluna, can be a little better known thanks to five new letters coming from a Parisian collection. Having reigned at least 6 years, he entered into diplomatic relationships with several sovereigns East of Mesopotamia, in particular with the kingdom of Kakmûm and especially that of Niqqum. A short-term correspondence is also proved true with Samsu-iluna, with whom, however, Iluni eventually entered war as is well known. The absence of any reference to the South of Babylonia in the letters of Iluni may suggest that his war and defeat in the face of Babylon happened several years after the revolt of Larsa by Rîm-Sîn II. One of the disputes between Ešnunna and Babylon was the trade of people captured by the Suteans. But since Samsu-iluna showed willingness in this respect, the war must have another cause not visible in our documents. It is possible that he saw in the development of Ešnunna under the reign of Iluni, an old ennemy of his country, and in the diplomatic efforts of Iluni to constitute a big alliance around him, an extreme danger for the safety of Babylon.*

Iluni fut un roi d'Ešnunna contemporain de Samsu-iluna de Babylone (1749-1712). Ce dernier l'a présenté au milieu de son règne comme l'un de ses plus dangereux adversaires, qu'il avait finalement terrassé. C'est pourquoi nous le connaissons aujourd'hui surtout sous l'image d'un roi rebelle qui appartient à l'époque des désordres de l'époque post-Hammurabi¹. Nos informations sur

* Mes remerciements au collectionneur qui a bien voulu mettre à ma disposition les documents publiés ici-même et à J.-M. Durand pour son aide toujours efficace.

¹ La réalité est moins simple, comme le montrera le dossier réuni ci-dessous.

Iluni sont de fait si peu nombreuses que les contours de cette figure sont bien flous².

La date de son avènement, la durée de son règne et même le moment précis de sa défaite face à Samsu-iluna marquée par sa capture sont encore indéterminés³. Plusieurs études récentes s'accordent pourtant sur le fait que c'est lui qui aurait commandé l'armée d'Ešnunna présente en Babylonie centrale entre S-i 8 et 9. Sa mise à mort peut avoir eu lieu en S-i 10⁴ ou une dizaine d'année après⁵, les inscriptions de Samsu-iluna laissant place à des interprétations contradictoires et la période étant particulièrement confuse.

La documentation s'enrichit cependant peu à peu. À Meturan, en moyenne Diyala, un bâtiment administratif (situé à Tel es-Sib à côté de Tell Haddad) dépendant d'Ešnunna a livré une documentation qui semble recouvrir, sinon la totalité, du moins une bonne partie du règne d'Iluni (cf. ci-dessous).

Le présent article voudrait apporter de nouvelles pièces d'autant plus utiles qu'elles comportent des lettres d'Iluni lui-même relatives à sa politique extérieure. Leur origine archéologique n'est pas renseignée mais peut se déduire de leur contenu et de leur genre. Ce petit lot est aujourd'hui conservé dans une collection privée à Paris qui contient d'autres documents faisant

² Cf. D. Charpin, D. O. Edzard et M. Stol, *Mesopotamien. Die altbabylonische Zeit* (OBO 160/4), p. 347 ; A. Rositani, *Rim-Anum Texts in the British Museum* (NISABA 4), 2003, p. 20 et A. Seri, *The House of Prisoners. Slavery and State in Uruk During the Revolt against Samsu-iluna* (SANER 2), 2013, en particulier p. 49-51.

³ Sur son histoire D. Charpin, *Le clergé d'Ur*, 1986, p. 175 ; en dernier lieu, A. Seri, *The House of Prisoners. Slavery and State in Uruk During the Revolt against Samsu-iluna* (SANER 2), 2013, en particulier p. 49-51.

⁴ Cf. en dernier lieu H. T. Vedeler, « the Ideology of Rim-Sin II of Larsa », *JANEH* 2, 2015, p. 1-17 et particulièrement p. 3. Il est néanmoins certain que sa mort a été postérieure à celle de Rim-Sîn II. Après avoir mentionné la fin de Rim-Sîn II, Samsu-iluna (*RIME* 4, p. 387) donne son bilan de 36 rois rebelles vaincus. La capture d'Iluni est ensuite mentionnée, ce qui donne l'impression que l'information constitue un ajout.

⁵ Dans sa thèse *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Me-turan* (Tell Al-Sib and Tell Haddad), Thesis presented to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Glasgow for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, 1983, A.-K. A.-J. Mustafa reprend la date traditionnelle de l'an 23, p. 58. Ce point de vue remonte à T. Jacobsen, *OIP* 43, p. 200.

très probablement partie du même ensemble « archivistique », ou du moins qui proviennent du même bâtiment. Un indice supplémentaire de leur attribution au règne d'Iluni vient de leurs liens avec les archives de Meturan déjà mentionnées. D'autres pièces appartenant au même ensemble documentaire se trouvent ailleurs, à l'Université de Cornell⁶ ou en Irak⁷.

Du lot parisien en cours d'édition sont extraites cinq lettres appartenant à la correspondance d'Iluni. Quatre sont écrites à son nom. Seule la n° 5 : PM 203⁸ lui est adressée. Deux des lettres dont Iluni est l'auteur ont la particularité d'être datées d'un nom d'année de ce roi⁹. Il s'agit donc de copies de lettres envoyées ou bien de textes préparatoires archivés. C'est sûrement le cas de la lettre n° 2 : PM 205, d'après ses caractéristiques ; mais elle ne porte pas de date et a tout l'air d'être un brouillon. Ces données prouvent que les documents proviennent bien de chez Iluni¹⁰. Théoriquement, lorsque l'ensemble documentaire sera reconstitué on devrait trouver réunis à la fois la correspondance passive et quelques copies de lettres expédiées ou à l'état de projet, les lettres des administrateurs du pays d'Ešnunna adressées au roi (seulement nommé de manière classique « mon seigneur »), la correspondance palatiale (comme pour les archives de Mari, tous les messages reçus dans le palais ne s'adressent pas au roi mais à

⁶ Le professeur Jared Miller m'a aimablement transmis son index dans le cadre de la préparation de son édition des textes paléo-babyloniens de l'Université Cornell. Il doit aussi publier 5 lettres adressées à Iluni (CUNES 53-02-137 ; 53-02-136 ; 53-02-139 ; 53-02-142 ; 53-02-143).

⁷ Selon les informations que m'a aimablement communiquées Jacob Jawdat, qui doit publier 4 lettres d'Iluni témoins d'une correspondance entre lui et « un prince amorrite concernant des questions militaires » nommé « Bêl-la-pur ». Il m'a mentionné en outre l'existence d'un traité d'Iluni où figure le nom d'Inzuršakšu (cf. ci-dessous).

⁸ J'adopte ici la numérotation propre à cette collection.

⁹ Seule la formule du n° 4 : 205-bis se réfère explicitement à Iluni, mais il y a peu de doute qu'il en soit ainsi pour le n° 1 : PM 204, d'autant que le mois *kinkum* est typique du calendrier d'Ešnunna (cf. ci-dessous).

¹⁰ La situation est identique avec les textes d'Iluni qu'étudie Jacob Jawdat à Bagdad : au moins 2 lettres adressées à « Bêl-la-pur » de la part d'Iluni sont datées d'une année d'Iluni tandis que la lettre écrite par « Bêl-la-pur » ne comporte pas de date.

des personnalités de son entourage et de son administration)¹¹ et des textes administratifs¹². Cette documentation provient peut-être du palais d'Iluni à Tell Asmar, l'antique Ešnunna, qui devait être sa capitale comme le montre le titre (« roi d'Ešnunna ») que lui prête Samsu-iluna.

Pourtant, un autre lieu de résidence (comme par exemple la cité de Zabban, qui faisait partie du pays d'Ešnunna et dont Iluni évoque la restauration dans un de ses noms d'année) pourrait être le lieu d'origine de la présente archive. Il n'est pas impossible que les débordements de la Diyala, dont il est question dans ces documents (cf. ci-dessous), aient généré un déménagement provisoire du roi d'Ešnunna. Ce contexte serait en arrière-plan de la recopie et de l'archivage d'une partie des lettres diplomatiques, une pratique administrative exceptionnelle.

Les lettres d'Iluni, publiées ci-dessous, donnent deux types d'informations : des noms d'années (deux lettres sont précisément datées, ce qui est rare à l'époque paléo-babylonienne¹³) et le contenu de la correspondance entre Iluni et plusieurs personnalités étrangères au royaume d'Ešnunna. Les sujets abordés sont de nature économique, mais surtout diplomatique et militaire. Le n° 4 : 205-bis a l'intérêt de mentionner nommément Samsu-iluna. Tout en donnant des informations complémentaires sur les relations entre Ešnunna et la Babylonie, ce dossier nous permet d'entrevoir les relations diplomatiques d'Ešnunna avec les États orientaux. De ce fait, nous apprenons fort peu de choses sur ce qui se passait au même moment en Mésopotamie. Dès lors ces documents ne permettent pas de faire des progrès immédiats ou certains sur la possible implication d'Iluni dans le dossier babylonien des années S-i 8 à 10, en admettant qu'il était roi d'Ešnunna à cette époque.

Le présent article se contentera donc de tirer quelques conclusions préliminaires sur le règne d'Iluni, son royaume et ses alliances.

¹¹ On doit placer dans cette catégorie une lettre de dame Abi-šalim à Kubburum (texte inédit n° 210).

¹² Un seul document de ce genre est explicitement présent dans cette collection, il s'agit de l'inédit n° 191 ; cf. ci-dessous.

¹³ Cf. par exemple AbB 14 58.

Liste des textes :

- n° 1 : PM 204 (Iluni à Inzuršakšu)
- n° 2 : PM 205 (Iluni à Inzuršakšu)
- n° 3 : PM 51 (Iluni à Inzuršakšu)
- n° 4 : PM 205-bis (Iluni à Hadanhuha)
- n° 5 : PM 203 (Tabtamnu à Iluni)

Dates et noms d'années

— n° 1 [PM 204] : iti *ki-in-kum* u₄ 20-kam mu alam ḡḡeštin-an-na (ba-dim₂) = 20/xii/« Année où la statue de ḡḡeštinana (a été fabriquée)¹⁴ » ;

— n° 4 [PM 205-bis] : iti *ki-iš-ki-iš-šum* u₄-20-kam mu diḡir-ni lugal-e i₇-dur-ul₃ niḡ₂-ha-lam-ma-ta ka ba-uš₂-a mu-un-ba-al-la₂¹⁵ = 20/xi/« Année où Iluni le roi a creusé la Diyala dont l'embouchure avait été obstruée¹⁶ par une catastrophe¹⁷. »

L'attribution des noms d'années à Iluni

Si ces deux années étaient déjà attestées à Meturan (Tel-es-Sib)¹⁸, cette documentation ne permettait pas de savoir à quel roi elles appartenaient. En effet, les noms d'années (qui sont en sumérien) dans ces textes administratifs ne mentionnent presque jamais le nom du roi et sont d'ailleurs la plupart du temps abrégés. Cet anonymat rendait donc difficile *a priori* tout rapprochement avec Iluni. Les textes retrouvés dans un tas situé dans une pièce (dite

¹⁴ Pour ce nom d'années, cf. A.-K. Mustafa, *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Meturan...*, p. 39.

¹⁵ Un document administratif (PM 191) a été rédigé la même année (au mois vii) : iti *ki-nu-nu* u₄ 3-kam mu diḡir-ni lugal-e, i₇-dur-ul₃ niḡ₂-ha-lam-ma-ta, ka-uš₂-a mu-un-ba-al-la₂.

¹⁶ Pour uš₂ = *sekērum* ; cf. B. Lafont, « Un nouveau texte d'Ur III sur l'irrigation », RA 74, 1980, p. 38.

¹⁷ niḡ₂-ha-lam-ma (var. nam-ha-lam-ma comme le synonyme nam-gilim-ma/niḡ₂-gilim-ma) est l'équivalent de l'akkadien *šahluqtum* (cf. CAD Š/1, p. 98-100).

¹⁸ A.-K. A.-J. Mustafa, *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Me-turan*, 1983.

14) et parmi lesquels figure une formule d'année « année d'Iluni le roi » constituaient un ensemble à l'évidence homogène sur le plan archivistique. La lettre n° 1 : PM 204 montre désormais que l'Année de la statue de Ġeštinaana appartient au règne d'Iluni, puisqu'elle sert à dater une lettre de lui. Quant à la seconde formule, mu i₇ durul, dont nous avons ici la version complète, elle est aussi déjà attestée à Meturan¹⁹ sous une forme encore incomplète²⁰. La nouvelle version attribue nommément les travaux accomplis sur la Diyala à Iluni. Ainsi gagnons-nous deux années supplémentaires pour Iluni.

D. Charpin (NABU 1998/29), en se fondant sur l'unité archivistique et les convergences prosopographiques de ce même lot de Meturan édité par A.-K. Mustafa dans sa thèse avait proposé comme point de départ la liste suivante :

- mu i-lu-ni lugal = « année où Iluni (est devenu) roi »
- mu-us₂-sa i-lu-ni lugal = « Année qui suit celle où Iluni (est devenu) roi » (année d'attente) ;
- mu bad₃ uru aK-si-a^{ki} ba-gul = « Année où le rempart de la ville d'AKsia a été détruit » ;
- mu bad₃ za-ab-ba-an^{ki} ù bad₃ uru la-šar-mar ba-dim₂ = « Année où le rempart de Zabban et le rempart de Lašarmar ont été construits » ;
- mu AN ZU UR UR DAM = « Année de... »

Cette liste se réduit donc théoriquement à trois années. Or d'autres noms d'années figurent dans ce même lot de la salle 14. Si l'on tient compte des textes des autres pièces, on distingue trois groupes de textes correspondant à trois périodes : un lot bien distinct, sans doute le plus ancien²¹, a été constitué alors que Nanna-makkūr et Erībam étaient les principaux acteurs de ce petit centre administratif. Ces textes ont été trouvés pour

¹⁹ Chez A.-K. Mustafa (*The Old Babylonian Tablets from Me-turan*), la lecture « mu i₇ gibil » doit être corrigée.

²⁰ Par ailleurs, le texte de Meturan n° 18 donne une version presque complète avec une variante : mu i₇ durul nam°-ha-lam-ma-ta. On doit abandonner la lecture : i₇ gibil nam-ha-di-ba-ta-<al>.

²¹ L'« Année de Sanipâ » est attribuée à Šilli-Sîn par M. Sigrist et P. Damerow ; cf. <http://cdli.ucla.edu/tools/yearenames/HTML/T30K21.htm>. Une autre possibilité est envisagée ci-dessous.

l'essentiel dans un locus particulier (salle 56). Cette archive témoigne des activités des magasiniers-*šatammum*, qui comprenaient notamment la réception des taxes comme le *bīltum*. On trouve les noms de plusieurs gouverneurs (Mār-ili gouverneur de Meturan, Ibni-Tišpak fils de Belanum, gouverneur de Zabban²², Erra-abum gouverneur de Karahar). On constate que plusieurs villes de la région ont pu dépendre administrativement de Meturan, comme Terqa, Batir, Karahar, Zabban²³. Le nom d'un administrateur, Iluni, est enregistré sur plusieurs documents, parfois en tandem avec un certain Ahuni. Puisque cet anthroponyme n'était pas rare, rien ne prouve qu'il faille l'identifier avec Iluni le futur roi d'Ešnunna, mais cela reste une possibilité.

Le second groupe de textes, presque tous retrouvés dans la salle 14, se divise lui-même en deux sous-ensembles pour des raisons prosopographiques et de datation. Le premier, identifié par D. Charpin, représente la première partie du règne d'Iluni.

Dans ce sous-ensemble, le nom de Bali-El, sans doute un administrateur, revient souvent. Il est généralement question de distributions d'orge à diverses personnes ou groupes. Parmi les récipiendaires, deux personnes attirent particulièrement l'attention : Hulhul l'Élamite et Talmuš-huha²⁴ le roi de Šuda'u. Hulhul est attesté au début de l'an 1 d'Iluni, puis il est visiblement présent à Meturan presque toute l'Année de la (construction) de la muraille de Zabban, ce qui prouve que ce n'est pas un simple étranger de passage. Enfin, on le retrouve le premier mois de l'année (de la destruction) de la muraille d'AKsia. Il cesse ensuite d'être mentionné dans les autres documents de l'année. Il n'est visiblement plus à Meturan à partir du mois VIII. Quant à Talmuš-huha, il s'est fait représenter à Meturan par son messenger Hašip (n° 5) puis s'est

²² Pour cette ville, cf. A. Fuchs, « Das Osttigrisgebiet von Agum II. bis zu Darius I (ca. 1500 bis 500 v. Chr.) », dans P. Miglus et S. Mühl éd., *Between the Culture: the Central Tigris Region from the 3rd to the 1st Millenium BC: Conference at Heidelberg, January 22nd-24th, 2009* (HSAO 14), 2011, p. 230.

²³ Cf. texte n° 111.

²⁴ C'est un NP hurrite du type *Ta-al-mu-úš-^du-kùr* ; d'après le texte administratif de Tell Hariri-Mari : M.18212 ; cf. récemment T. Richter, *Vorarbeiten zu einem hurritischen Namenbuch*, 2016, p. 527-528.

peut-être installé quelque temps à Meturan (n° 6 et n° 11)²⁵. Les relations avec ce roi sont mentionnées d'abord le 1^{er} mois de l'Année de la muraille de Zabban (n° 5) et les mois VIII et IX de l'Année de la destruction de la muraille d'AKsia (n° 6 et n° 11). D'après ces indications, les années mu Iluni lugal, mu bad₃ Zabban, mu bad₃ AKsia se suivent peut-être dans cet ordre. La mention de ces personnages, peut-être présents à titre d'alliés d'Ešnunna, peut avoir un rapport avec le conflit qui transparaît dans ces noms d'années (mise en défense de la frontière à Zabban puis offensive contre AKsia à rechercher en amont de Meturan et Zabban [?]²⁶).

Enfin, le deuxième sous-ensemble est représenté par les textes datés des années mu AN LAGAB.LAGAB ma-da-bi, mu alan^dĜeštin-an-na et mu i₇ durul. Le même groupe de personnages y revient de manière récurrente (par exemple Zikir [= Zikir-ilišu ?], Ilī-iqīšam, Abu-waqar, etc). La nature de cette archive est assez similaire à celle du deuxième groupe, mais les gens attestés sont généralement différents. Néanmoins on remarque la mention dans les deux lots d'un individu nommé Zakur-ahum. C'est un personnage d'une certaine importance, responsable par deux fois du convoiement de chevaux, comme l'illustrent les textes « Mustafa » n° 3 daté du mois I/Année de la muraille d'AKsia, (nourriture) de « 3 chevaux de Zakur-ahum qui [va] les [conduire] de Zabban à Terqa »²⁷, et « Mustafa » n° 24 (du XII/Année de la statue de Ĝeštinana) qui comptabilise de « la nourriture pour 7 chevaux — 1 *ban* (d'orge) pour chacun — appartenant au palais, que les gens de Zakur-ahum ont conduits à Meturan »²⁸. Il est très probablement l'auteur de deux lettres (inédites) adressées à son sei-

²⁵ Nous lisons *a-bu-la-at*^l NP « allocation (pour) les quartiers de Talmuš-huha ». Le texte n° 3 daté du mois I de l'année de (la destruction) de la muraille d'AKsia est peut-être à lire l. 9-10 : 1 sila₃ ziz₂ šuku-a-at^dutu-ga-mil ša ma-har <ta>l-muš-hu-ha [i^l]-k[a]-lu-ú « 1 litre de farine, ration de Šamaš-gamil qui est retenu devant Talmuš-huha (?). »

²⁶ D. Frayne, « The Zagros Campaigns of the Ur III Kings », CSMS Journal 3, 2008, p. 43-44.

²⁷ 3 anše-kur-ra ša za-kur-a-hu ša iš-tu uru za-ba-an^{ki} a-na te[r-qá^{ki} i-re-du]-šu-<nu>-ti.

²⁸ N° 24 : ša₃-gal 7 anše-kur-ra 1 ban₂-ta ša e₂-gal ša ni-ši za-kur-a-hu a-na me-tu-ra-an^{ki} ir-du-ú.

gneur (donc Iluni) qui débutent par la formule caractéristique pour un gouverneur : « Le pays et le district, ça va »²⁹. L'une des lettres³⁰ est consacrée à la moisson de la ville Zabban, ce qui indique au moins que cette ville était dans sa juridiction, voire qu'il en était gouverneur. Nous avons vu que le titre est attesté dans le premier groupe documentaire. Enfin, on peut relever une ultime particularité de ce groupe : l'usage du nom de mois ^dU₃-gu-la. Il est attesté 3 années (Année de la statue de Ġeštinana, Année de la Diyala, mu AN LAGAB.LAGAB ma-da-bi). Ce mois, qui fait référence à la parèdre de Tišpak, est déjà connu à Tell Asmar (Ešnunna) et Tell Ischali (Nērebtum)³¹. S. Greengus le place au mois VI du calendrier³². Mais on peut aussi faire la supposition que, puisque le mois V (*Zibnum*) n'est pas attesté, c'est qu'il a été remplacé par le mois Ugula. Un nom d'année isolé mentionne justement la fabrication d'une statue de la divinité ^dU₃-gu-la (n° 127). D'après le personnel représenté dans celui-ci, ce texte se rattache visiblement au troisième groupe documentaire.

Il y eut sans doute, entre l'Année de la destruction d'AKsia (an 3 d'Iluni ?) et l'Année de la statue de Ġeštinana (an 4[?])³³, une refonte du service des intendants des magasins. Il se peut que les tablettes retrouvées dans le même tas fussent rangées à l'origine dans des paniers séparés, placés côte à côte. Il est impossible de savoir si la réunion des données des deux lots nous donne une série continue d'années (6 ans) ou bien s'il faut supposer un hiatus entre les deux ensembles. De même, la fin cette archive n'implique pas celle du règne d'Iluni.

Il est bien sûr particulièrement difficile d'établir l'ordre des noms d'années de ce second sous-ensemble. Toutefois l'absence des mois XI et XII pour l'année dite mu diġir LAGAB.LAGAB ma-da-bi, alors que les deux autres sont quasi-complètes ou possèdent un mois XII, offre la possibilité qu'elle puisse être la dernière de la

²⁹ PM 18 et 22 : *mātum u hašum šalim*.

³⁰ PM 18.

³¹ Cf. M. Cohen, *The Cultic Calendars of the Ancient Near East*, 1993, p. 252, 254 et 267. En dernier lieu, M. Cohen, *Festivals and Calendars of The Ancient Near East*, 2015, p. 289.

³² Cf. JAOS 107, 1987, p. 226

³³ Cf. ci-dessous.

série. En outre, l'année de la statue de Ġeština précède peut-être l'année de la Diyala. En effet, la lettre datée de ce premier nom d'année évoque un grave incident survenu sur le cours du Ṭaban, ce qui mobilise une bonne partie des forces d'Iluni. On est tenté de mettre en relation cette information avec la mention dans le deuxième nom d'année du creusement du Durul (= Diyala), souvent associé dans la documentation au Ṭaban, dont le cours était parallèle au sien³⁴. Il pourrait y avoir eu simultanément sur la Diyala et ses autres bras orientaux (comme principalement le Ṭaban) de graves problèmes provoqués par une « catastrophe » (niġ₂-ha-lam-ma) fluviale. D'autre part, une ou plusieurs brèches se seraient produites sur le Ṭaban, ce qui a pu entraîner une inondation et peut-être même un déplacement de l'embouchure du fleuve, ce qui expliquerait l'évocation de son obstruction³⁵. La mobilisation des forces du royaume avait été telle que la formule de l'année suivante ne pouvait que la mentionner. Comme l'intervention sur le cours du Ṭaban a eu lieu au mois XII, comme l'indique la date de la lettre n° 1 : PM 204, l'incident peut résulter d'une crue exceptionnelle, qui se produit à partir de mars³⁶.

En définitive, Iluni a régné au moins six années pleines. En outre, deux autres noms d'années peuvent leur être ajoutés, bien qu'ils ne soient peut-être que des formules variantes. Mais rien ne prouve cependant que la liste soit complète. Le prédécesseur

³⁴ Sur ce sujet, cf. A. Fuchs, HSAO 14, 2011, p. 231.

³⁵ Phénomène qui a été observé, par exemple, sur le fleuve jaune en Chine en 1938.

³⁶ Ce genre de drame s'était peut-être déjà produit des années auparavant à la fin du règne de Hammu-rabi ; cf. D. Charpin, OBO 160/4, p. 332-334 n. 1735 qui comprend le début du nom d'année (la formule que nous avons est incomplète) « (quand) Ešnunna fut détruite par les grandes eaux » (eš₃-nun-na^{ki} a-gal-gal-la mu-un-gul-gul-l[a]) ; Horsnell, *The Year Names Reconstructed and Critically Annotated in Light of their Exemplars*, Vol. 2, Hamilton, 1999, p. 157. Cf. l'interprétation différente de M. Rutz et P. Michalowski, « The Flooding of Ešnunna, The Fall of Mari, Hammurabi's Deeds in Babylonian Literature and History », *JCS* 68, 2016, p. 15-43. Leur lecture est cependant à revoir comme l'a montré N. Ziegler, *NABU* 2016/41.

d'Iluni semble avoir été Lipissa³⁷ à qui l'on peut donc attribuer le lot administratif de Meturan antérieur à Iluni (cf. ci-dessus)³⁸.

Le problème épineux du synchronisme entre Iluni et Samsu-iluna

Il est pour l'heure bien difficile de mettre en relation ces événements avec l'histoire de Babylone. Le sujet a été amplement traité, quoique le déroulement des événements reste encore confus. L'importance de l'implication d'Ešnunna dans les affaires babyloniennes, surtout entre la fin de S-i 8 et S-i 10, est montrée par la documentation d'Uruk rédigée sous le court règne de Rīm-Anum³⁹. La participation d'Iluni à ces événements est possible,

³⁷ L'inédit PM 69 est scellé au sceau d'un serviteur de Lipissa et faisait sans doute partie des « archives » d'Iluni. En outre, son nom a été identifié par J. Miller dans une lettre adressée à Iluni conservée actuellement à l'Université de Cornell. Il n'est pas exclu que ce soit le même Lipissa qui était général ešnunéen au temps de Zimri-Lîm (cf. ARM XXVI/2 526 : 24-25 et 35-36) : *li-pí-is-sà <gal>-mar-tu lu₂ eš₃-nun-na^{ki} (...) 'li-pí-is-sà qa-du ša-bi-šu a-na eš₃-nun-na^{ki} ip-ta-tà-ar* « Lipissa vient de faire retraite vers Ešnunna avec sa troupe. »

³⁸ Les noms d'année attestés à Meturan, Année de la statue en or, Année-bis de la statue en or et l'Année de Sanipa, sont donc potentiellement ceux de Lipissa.

³⁹ Pour la bibliographie, cf. note 2. Les hostilités entre Ešnunna et Babylone reprennent au moins en l'an 8 de S-i (= Rīm-Anum 0 d'après la chronologie de D. Charpin, RA 108, 2014, p. 121-160). Mais ce n'est qu'en l'an 9 de S-i qu'Ešnunna (dénommé Ida-Maraš) est battue, ce qui est rendu officiel par le nom de l'année 10 qui évoque une victoire sur l'armée d'Ida-Maraš. En outre, le nom d'année S-i 10 montre que l'action d'Ešnunna s'inscrit dans une alliance qui comprend Larsa (Emut-bal), Uruk et Isin. Les textes contemporains de Rīm-Anum trouvés dans le palais de Sîn-kašid à Uruk compliquent ce schéma en montrant qu'Uruk a en réalité été en guerre contre Ešnunna, puis contre Larsa et Isin. Le nom d'année 2 de Rīm-Anum célèbre finalement sa victoire totale contre Larsa, Ešnunna, Isin et même Kazallu (Muti-abal), qui auraient lancé contre elle une attaque. On suppose donc que Babylone et Uruk ont combattu de conserve la coalition pour ensuite s'attribuer la victoire chacune séparément. Pour une raison encore peu claire, Uruk fut comptée néanmoins parmi les ennemis de Babylone. Le règne de Rīm-Anum s'interrompt brusquement au début de son an 2. Ainsi, à la fin de S-i 8, la guerre se concentrait-elle dans le Muti-abal, puis, l'année suivante, le

mais n'est pas entièrement prouvée⁴⁰. On doit donc envisager que l'attaque de Babylone sur Ešnunna de l'an 19 ait visé Iluni⁴¹. Dans

champ de bataille se transportait à Isin. Entre ces deux moments, les prisonniers d'Ešnunna affluèrent à Uruk et quelques-uns furent offerts à des divinités.

⁴⁰ Trois arguments ont été avancés jusqu'à présent. L'inscription de Kiš de Samsu-iluna associe la défaite de Rīm-Sîn à celle d'Iluni. Malgré tout, le lien chronologique entre les deux événements n'est pas clair étant donné qu'il s'agit d'un rappel historique tardif (cf. n. 4). Iluni aurait été reconnu roi un court moment à Ur, d'après un nom d'année (HE 167) et une empreinte de sceau d'Ilšu-ibbišu, qui se présente comme son serviteur, sur un contrat daté de S.-i. 8 (le nom d'Iluni en partie restitué est divinisé ! ; cf. A. Seri, *The House of Prisoners. Slavery and State in Uruk During the Revolt against Samsu-iluna*, SANER 2, 2013, p. 49-51). Rien n'empêche qu'il s'agisse d'un homonyme, car l'anthroponyme n'est pas rare. Enfin, A. Seri considère que notre Iluni est mentionné dans une tablette économique d'Uruk. Il s'agit de Nisaba 4 II, 21 (BM 16451) éditée par Rositani : ¹da-na-HI-ra-ri (⁴utu-na-a'-ra-ri d'après A. Seri !) lu₂ eš₃-nun-na^{ki}, ša i-lu-ni ensi₂ lu₂ eš₃-nun-na^{ki} ša iš-tu mu-ti-a-ba-al^{ki} ¹da-gan-ma-AN ú-ša-ri-a-am « (Réception par Ubar-Šamaš le prêtre de Šamaš de) NP homme d'Ešnunna appartenant à Iluni l'ensi d'Ešnunna que Daganma-El a fait ramener du Muti-abal ; (sorti du service de Sîn-šemi le responsable de la prison). (22/IX/Rim-Anum 0) ». Cependant, le même jour, il est aussi question de « 'a-wi-il-¹da-bi-um dumu i-bi-er-še-tim lu₂ eš₃-nun-na^{ki} ša mu-na-wi-rum ensi₂ lu₂ eš₃-nun-na^{ki} (II, 22 [BM 16449]). Pour A. Seri, il ne fait pas de doute qu'Iluni soit le prince d'Ešnunna, tandis que Munawirum, qui porte le même titre, serait un autre rebelle ešnunnéen (p. 51 et p. 232). L'auteur s'éloigne donc de l'interprétation d'A. Rositani qui suppose que le terme d'ensi₂ désigne une sorte de fermier conformément aux autres occurrences de son corpus. La mention le même jour de deux « chefs » d'Ešnunna laisse perplexe et rend très hypothétique l'explication d'A. Seri. En outre, Iluni a pris le titre de roi (šarrum), comme le montrent ses formules d'année, et Samsu-iluna lui reconnaît ce titre. Nous préférons donc l'interprétation d'A. Rositani. Il reste la possibilité que le titre ensi₂ (iššakku) soit ici à comprendre dans le sens d'« officier » (cf. CAD I/J, p. 263). Officier ou notable du royaume d'Ešnunna, il n'est pas exclu qu'il s'agisse d'Iluni avant qu'il ne monte sur le trône. Dans ce cas, cela prouverait que l'armée d'Ešnunna était alors dirigée par un prédécesseur d'Iluni. En définitive, il n'existe aucune preuve absolue qu'Iluni était roi à cette période. On ne peut prouver le contraire non plus.

⁴¹ L'an 20 est formulé ainsi : mu sa-am-su-i-lu-na lugal-e lugal sağ-kal kur nu-še-ga-ni bi₂-in-si₃-si₃-ga-a kilib₃-uğnim-ma-da-eš₃-nun-na^{ki} (...) sağ giš bi₂-in-ra-a « Année où Samsu-iluna le roi, roi supérieur qui ayant frappé le pays qui ne lui était plus obéissant, vainquit la totalité de l'armée du pays d'Ešnunna (...) » ; M. Horsnell, *The Year-Names of the First Dynasty of Babylon*, Vol. 2, Hamilton, 1999, p. 208.

cette hypothèse, son règne devrait avoir commencé après S-i 10 et s'être brutalement terminé en S-i 19.

La correspondance diplomatique

Iluni était le souverain d'un État qui allait de l'embouchure de la Diyala jusqu'à Zabban et peut-être Terqa⁴². Son autorité s'étendait sur un territoire bien peuplé, nommé dans les inscriptions de Samsu-iluna *Ida-maraš*⁴³. Sa correspondance montre qu'il a eu une activité diplomatique intense et a entretenu des rapports avec plusieurs princes étrangers importants, le plus connu étant Samsu-iluna. Ses autres correspondants sont Inzuršakšu (PM 51, 204, 205), Hadan-huha (n° 4 : PM 205-bis) et Tabtamnu (n° 5 : PM 203).

Iluni et Inzuršakšu roi de Niqquum (?)

Les trois lettres d'Iluni à Inzuršakšu (dont l'état de conservation est passable) témoignent de deux moments de leurs relations politiques. Une période pendant laquelle il n'est question que des habituels services que se rendent entre eux des alliés ; la préoccupation majeure d'Iluni est alors de régler les désordres provoqués par le Ṭaban.

Les deux autres lettres (non datées) montrent une situation beaucoup plus tendue entre les deux royaumes. Inzuršakšu a été en guerre mais Iluni n'est pas venu à son aide en dépit de leurs accords (n° 2 : PM 205). La lettre n° 3 : PM 51 doit avoir été écrite après les événements car Iluni souhaite organiser une entrevue pour apaiser leur contentieux. Il nous apprend alors que lui-même doit faire face à un ennemi et il s'apprête à mener une expédition à Dunnum. D'après le contenu de cette lettre, on serait

⁴² Cf. n° 1 : PM 204, 16.

⁴³ « Les rapports entre les régions du Haut-Habur et de l'est du Tigre. Le cas des deux *Ida-maraš* », L. Marti, Ch. Nicolle & K. Shawaly éd., *Recherches en Haute Mésopotamie 2. Mission archéologique de Bash Tapa (campagnes 2012-2013) et les enjeux de la recherche dans la région d'Erbil*, (Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 17), 2015, p. 37-49.

en hiver quelques mois avant la moisson. De toute évidence ce dossier se situe après l'année de la statue de Ġeština.

Mis à part le fait qu'Inzuršakšu est sûrement un prince oriental, étant donné ses accointances avec la région de Dêr (n° 1 : PM 204) et son lien explicite avec la ville d'Alman (cf. ci-dessous), d'autres documents permettent d'établir qu'il était le souverain d'un royaume dont la capitale était Niqqum.

Parmi les lettres qui doivent avoir été retrouvées avec celles d'Iluni figure le message d'une femme nommée Abi-šalim. Cette dame commence sa lettre adressée à un certain Kubburum par une bénédiction au nom de « la divine habitante de Niqqum »⁴⁴, ce qui indique qu'elle vivait dans ce lieu⁴⁵. Kubburum est en contact avec un « roi » qui doit être Iluni. Or, Abi-šalim est quelqu'un de proche d'Inzuršakšu⁴⁶. La ville de Niqqum n'a pas encore été localisée, mais elle est à situer à l'est d'Ešnunna. La ville est attestée depuis l'époque de Narām-Sîn jusqu'à l'époque achéménide⁴⁷. *La Géographie de Sargon* situe le pays de Niqqum entre le pays Gouti et celui de Dêr⁴⁸. Cette dernière indication correspond bien à la lettre n° 1 : PM 204 qui mentionne Dêr. Niqqum figure dans la liste géographique de Tell Harmal⁴⁹. Une lettre ancienne d'Ešnunna l'associe à Halman (= Alman) dans un contexte de guerre⁵⁰. À l'époque de Samsi-Addu elle est le siège d'une royauté d'après les textes de Šemšara⁵¹. Plus intéressant encore, elle apparaît dans les

⁴⁴ d⁴wa-ši-ba-at uru ni-iq-qum^{ki}.

⁴⁵ Inédit n° 210.

⁴⁶ Abi-šalim est l'auteure d'une lettre inédite adressée à Iluni qui mentionne aussi Inzuršakšu (CUNES 53-02-143, 2). Je remercie vivement J. Miller, qui m'a transmis l'index des lettres qu'il publie.

⁴⁷ Cf. W. Röllig, *RLA* 9, 2001, p. 569-570.

⁴⁸ V. Horowitz, *Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* (MC 8), 1998, p. 67-95.

⁴⁹ S. J. Levy, « Harmal Geographic List », *Sumer* 23, 1967, p. 50-83 : ni-qum^{ki} (l. 83 [col. iii]). Le passage est commenté par D. Frayne, *Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour*, 1997, p. 258.

⁵⁰ 1930-T713 : R. Whiting, *Old Babylonian Letters from Tell Asmar*, AS 22, 1987, p. 37-38.

⁵¹ J. Eidem et J. Læssøe, *The Shemshara Archives. Vol. 1 The Letters*, 2001, p. 143 ; texte n° 69 (lettre de Pišenden le roi d'Ita-palhum) : l. 27-20' : a-na a-bi-im ugula ra-bi-i-im ù na-ma-ri-im ù da-a-si lugal ni-qí-im^{ki} šu-pu-ur-ma ku₃-babbar ku₃-gi ù aš-la-le-em da-am-qa-am qí-bí-ma a-na ma-at ka-ak-mi-im li-iš-ta-hi-tú « Écris au

textes administratifs de Chogah Gavaneh dans l'ouest de l'Iran⁵². Enfin, une lettre sumérienne scolaire paléo-babylonienne montre que c'était une étape sur la route commerciale de l'étain⁵³. W. Röllig a supposé qu'elle se situait dans la région de la moyenne Diyala, mais son idée reposait sur une localisation aujourd'hui abandonnée du pays du Tupliaš (actuelle province de Kermanshah d'après A. Fuchs) dont faisait partie Niqqum au premier millénaire⁵⁴. Les renseignements que nous avons rassemblés pour l'époque paléo-babylonienne concordent avec la « Niqqum de Tup/gliaš » (bien que cette désignation indique peut-être l'existence d'une deuxième Niqqum à l'époque récente). En effet, la lettre n° 3 nous montre qu'Alman était une étape entre le royaume de Niqqum et d'Ešnunna⁵⁵. Il est possible même qu'Alman ait fait partie du territoire de Niqqum. Cette ville (= Halman) est

Père, le grand chef (l'empereur d'Élam), et le Namaréen et Dâsi le roi de Niqqum et évoque l'argent, l'or et les œuvres de valeur afin qu'ils attaquent le pays de Kakmum ! »

⁵² K. Abdi et G. Beckman, « An Early Second-Millennium Cuneiform Archive from Chogha Gavaneh, Western Iran », *JCS* 59, 2007, p. 39-91. C'est un site situé dans la plaine d'Islamabad-er-Gharb, au milieu de la ville de Shahabad-er-Gharb, dont la superficie d'origine a été estimée à 40 hectares, mais qui a été en grande partie détruit.

⁵³ CUNES 47-10-007 publiée par A. Kleinerman et E. Gadotti, *NABU* 2014/65. Ilak-nu'id, un agent commercial, est parti pour une expédition d'un mois et demi. Mais il s'est arrêté à Niqqum où son séjour s'éternise, au grand dam d'Utudug-e qui a financé la caravane. Celui-ci enjoint à son agent de lui envoyer l'étain et l'argent dus. On peut penser que Ilak-nu'id aurait dû aller jusqu'à Suse et revenir sans tarder, mais le climat et la société locale de Niqqum ne lui avaient peut-être pas déplu.

⁵⁴ Cf. A. Fuchs, « Tupliaš », *RLA* 14, 2014, p. 190-191. Comme l'explique cet auteur, la localisation de ce pays s'appuyait sur le texte de Ninive II R 39 n° 5 : 59, qui met en parallèle Tupliaš et Ešnunna. Les liens étroits entre Ešnunna et Niqqum tels qu'on peut les voir à l'époque d'Iluni sont peut-être à l'origine de cette confusion.

⁵⁵ Son nom figure aussi peut-être dans la lettre n° 1 : PM 204, 15.

localisée en Haute-Diyala et correspond à l'actuelle Ḫulwan⁵⁶. Il est donc exclu que Niqqum se soit trouvée en aval d'Alman⁵⁷.

La Niqqum paléo-babylonienne, à l'instar de celle documentée au premier millénaire, pourrait donc se situer dans une région plus éloignée, dans le Zagros, peut-être dans la province actuelle de Kermanshah en Iran. Un texte de Chogah Gavaneh pourrait même, selon nous, montrer un lien entre ce site et Niqqum. Le nom antique du site n'est pas connu⁵⁸. Le texte administratif n° 19 (l'un des mieux conservés du lot) recense un grand nombre de servantes réparties dans plusieurs localités sous la responsabilité de divers agents (une grande partie des documents publiés concerne la population féminine). Au début de la liste figurent 17 femmes présentes à Niqqum, puis vient un deuxième groupe qui dépend d'un agent dont on sait ailleurs qu'il était dans la « ville (?) du roi » (ša a-li^{1*} šar*-ri-i[m^{*?}])⁵⁹, puis un troisième groupe se trouve dans la Vieille Ville⁶⁰, tandis que les autres groupes de femmes sont localisés dans des lieux manifestement secondaires. Il nous semble donc que ce document décrit Niqqum, ses quartiers et peut-être des villes ou des bourgs de sa périphérie. Dès lors, nous nous demandons si le site de Chogah Gavaneh, l'un des sites les plus importants de la plaine d'Islamabad⁶¹, ne serait pas un candidat pour la ville de Niqqum, même si le site, qui est au nord de Susa, est effectivement bien éloigné de la Diyala⁶².

⁵⁶ D'après S. Parpola et M. Porter, *The Helsinki Atlas of the Near East in the Neo-Assyrian Period*, 2001, p. 9 ; cf. aussi W. Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 2007, p. 151. Mentionnons qu'elle apparaît aussi dans le n° 4 de Chogah Gavaneh : « i-na¹ al-ma-an^{*ki}. Cf. aussi A. Fuchs, HSAO 14, 2011, p. 231-232.

⁵⁷ Ce renseignement exclut la proposition de D. Frayne de placer Niqqum à Khanaqin ; cf. D. Frayne, « On the Location of Simurru », in G. Young et alii éd., *Crossing Boundaries and Linking Horizons. Studies in Honor of Michael C. Astour*, 1997, p. 243-269.

⁵⁸ G. Beckman conjecture que le nom antique était Palum ; JCS 59, p. 51.

⁵⁹ Texte n° 18.

⁶⁰ Au lieu de la lecture uru-gibil, nous lisons d'après l'autographie uru-egir ; cf. CAD A/1 ālu p. 381.

⁶¹ K. Abdi et G. Beckman, JCS 59, p. 40.

⁶² Mais ses archives prouvent que ce centre entretenait des relations nourries avec les cités de la Diyala ou de l'est du Tigre, cf. K. Abdi et G. Beckman, JCS 59, p. 48.

Comme le notent K. Abdi et G. Beckman, ce site se trouve sur la grande route du Khorasan et était donc une étape potentielle pour le commerce de l'étain⁶³.

Le nom d'Inzuršakšu lui-même est sans doute élamite⁶⁴, ce qui conviendrait bien à un prince voisin de Suse et de l'Élam. Ses relations avec Iluni reposaient sur un traité dont la version écrite a semble-t-il été conservée⁶⁵. Le serment d'Iluni à l'égard de son homologue est rappelé négativement par Inzuršakšu dans le n° 2 : PM 205 : 7 : *ita niš ili-ka tētetiq* « tu viens d'enfreindre ton serment par le dieu ». Inzuršakšu en veut à Iluni de ne pas être venu à son aide alors qu'il lui en avait fait la demande expresse. Ce traité d'alliance comportait donc des clauses relatives à une entraide militaire. Cependant, Iluni conteste le motif invoqué par son homologue. L'appel d'Inzuršakšu sortirait du cadre du traité, peut-être parce que l'opération du roi de Niqqum était plus de nature offensive que défensive. En ce cas, Iluni considérait que c'était son allié qui avait contrevenu au traité.

Malgré cette brouille passagère⁶⁶, ces deux souverains étaient proches l'un de l'autre comme le montre la manière dont ils avaient choisi de s'adresser l'un à l'autre. Iluni se présente toujours comme l'« ami » (*ra'imum*) d'Inzuršakšu et accompagne ses lettres de formules de politesse d'usage au nom de ses dieux Šamaš et Tišpak. Ces deux caractéristiques manquent dans l'adresse de la lettre à Hadan-huha. On ne trouve pas à la cour de Zimri-Lîm à une époque légèrement antérieure ce type de marque d'amitié entre souverains de même rang où l'on affiche plus volontiers sa position hiérarchique exprimée en termes de parenté (frère ou fils). Cette pratique se perpétue en Haute Djéziré au

⁶³ Cf. Y. Majidzadeh, « Lapis lazuli and the Great Khorasan Road », *Paléorient* 8/1, 1982 ; T. Potts, *Mesopotamia and East* (Oxford University Committee for Archaeology Monograph 37), 1994, p. 38-42.

⁶⁴ Son nom rappelle Inzuri (le dieu Inšušinak) ou Inzurhapruh « Inšušinak je vénère (?) », d'après W. Hinz et H. Koch, *Elamisches Wörterbuch*, Teil II, 1987, p. 764.

⁶⁵ Cf. note 7.

⁶⁶ On ignore si Inzuršakšu revint à des sentiments meilleurs à l'égard d'Iluni ou si Ešnunna ne perdit pas à un moment crucial pour elle un précieux allié.

début du règne de Samsu-iluna⁶⁷. Ce sont les subalternes qui se qualifiaient plutôt entre eux d'amis⁶⁸. Il est possible que cet usage du roi d'Ešnunna, fort éloigné du style impérial des lettres du *Rubûm* d'autrefois, donne un indice sur l'origine du pouvoir d'Iluni ou marque une évolution de l'image royale. Quoi qu'il en soit, le fait qu'Iluni et Inzuršakšu soient des « amis » illustre les liens personnels étroits (notamment consolidés par un traité) qui les unissaient ; même si le comportement de l'un et de l'autre n'était visiblement pas toujours exemplaire.

La lettre n° 1 : PM 204 illustre un exemple de coopération. Inzuršakšu est capable d'aider Iluni à se procurer du bois d'œuvre tandis que le roi d'Ešnunna dispose avec ses artisans d'un savoir-faire dans certains domaines qui intéresse son allié. Le type d'essences de bois qu'Iluni recherche n'est pas précisé, mais comme il le désigne par le terme de bois de « couverture » (*tašlilu* ou *šullulu*)⁶⁹, on peut supposer qu'il devait être employé à la construction ou la restauration d'un bâtiment officiel, palais ou temple. Une autre possibilité envisageable est l'usage de ce bois pour l'aménagement des rives du Ṭaban, qui concentre alors les efforts des équipes d'Ešnunna. Un nom d'année d'Abi-ešuh (successeur de Samsu-iluna) évoque aussi l'usage de bois à cet effet (tout au moins d'après la lecture littérale de la formule en sumérien) : « Année où Abi-ešuh le roi, grâce à la force incommensurable de Marduk, a endigué avec du bois⁷⁰ le cours du Tigre »⁷¹ ou la formule de l'année suivante « Année d'Abī-ešuh le roi, la nou-

⁶⁷ Cf. les lettres diplomatiques de Tell Leilan dans J. Eidem, PIHANS 117, 2011.

⁶⁸ Je citerais comme exemple la correspondance d'Itûr-Asdû, gouverneur de Nahur dans le Triangle du Habur. Le roi déchu de Nahur s'adresse à lui comme « Asqur-Addu, ton ami » (inédit A.3652). Sinon on trouve bien sûr ce type d'adresse couramment entre dignitaires du pays d'Ešnunna ou de Babylonie.

⁶⁹ Lettre n° 1 : PM 204 : l. 4 et 29.

⁷⁰ L'expression sumérienne *ĝiṣ keše₂* est non seulement susceptible d'être glosée par l'akkadien *erretum* (*ša nārim*) « barrage (de rivière/canal) » mais l'équivalence avec *tašliltum* est aussi attestée dans la série proto-Kagal (MSL XIII, p. 88), cela dit sans avoir de rapport avec un ouvrage fluvial ; Å. Sjöberg, E. Bergmann et G. Gragg, *The Collection of The Sumerian Temple Hymns* (TCS III), 1969, p. 135 et CAD T *tašliltu* A, p. 284.

⁷¹ *mu a-bi-e-šu-uh lugal-e usu-mah-damar-utu-ta i₇-idigna ĝiṣ bi₂-in-keše₂-da* ; cf. *Year Names System of Babylon* II, p. 260-261.

velle année après qu'il a endigué avec du bois le cours du Tigre »⁷². Cependant Iluni, dans sa lettre à Inzuršakšu, ne fait aucun rapprochement explicite entre la demande de bois et les travaux sur la Diyala.

La forêt se trouvait en dehors du domaine d'Ešnunna, du côté de Dêr⁷³. Pour obtenir du bois, il fallait mobiliser une troupe d'Ešnunna qui puisse s'y rendre. Étant donné que la zone forestière devait se situer entre Dêr et Niqqum, l'aide de cette dernière pouvait être sollicitée. Les circonstances empêchèrent Iluni de monter l'expédition suffisante, fait qui suggère que la quantité de bois requis était sûrement considérable⁷⁴. Faute d'hommes, il demanda à Inzuršakšu de lui en procurer.

Il est possible que Niqqum ait eu maille à partir avec l'Élam (le texte n° 3 : PM 51 est malheureusement trop abîmé pour qu'on en soit certain). Cette affaire n'aurait pas arrangé Iluni, dont la poli-

⁷² Inédit PM 36 : mu *a-bi-e-šu-uh* lugal-e mu gibil egir *i₇-idigna* ġiš bi₂-in-keše₂-da. Le contrat doit être prochainement publié par J.-M. Durand. La formule (mu) gibil egir est bien connue à l'époque d'Abi-ešuh (cf. Horsnell, *Year Names System of Babylon II*, p. 244-245).

⁷³ Un autre exemple d'expédition en forêt est peut-être fourni par Mustafa n° 144 : 4-10 (nous proposons quelques modifications à sa transcription) : *'ul-lu-ġi *qa⁷¹-du-um* 30 ġuruš-meš *tap-pí-šu, il-li-ik-ma i-na uru/ ġiš (?) ab-ri-im, a-šar ġiš^{*ha₂}* lu₂ BAD₃.AN^{ki}, *i-ri-iš* 9 ġuruš-meš *il-qí-a-am-ma, i-na li-ib-bi-šu-nu* 1 ġuruš *'mil-ki-le-el, il-qí* 8 ġuruš-meš *i-na me-tu-ra-an^{ki}, a-na-ku* *'a-na-ad⁷-di-in-ma* = « Ullugi est allé avec 30 travailleurs ses collègues et à Abrum ('Le Taillis') il a demandé aux habitants de Dêr où se trouvait les arbres. Il m'a pris 9 travailleurs et milki-li-El a pris 1 travailleur parmi eux. Moi-même je fournirai 8 travailleurs à Meturan. (...) » (Ullugi et Milki-li-El sont attestés comme NP à Mari). Les liens entre Ešnunna et Dêr étaient sûrement étroits, comme l'illustre l'inédit PM 208 que l'on doit à une princesse d'Ešnunna installée dans cette cité comme prêtresse d'Ištaran. Les forêts dans cette région jouissaient peut-être d'un statut (international) particulier puisque Iluni peut (et doit) se servir lui-même. Dans le Haut Habur, les bois étaient considérés comme propriété divine et leur exploitation était partagée entre plusieurs communautés (cf. J.-M. Durand, *Le culte des pierres et les monuments commémoratifs en Syrie amorrite. FM VIII* [N.A.B.U. 9], 2005, p. 38-42). La demande de coopération d'Iluni à Inzuršakšu n'est pas sans rappeler celle entre Hiram de Tyr et Salomon dans 1 Rois 5 : « Et Salomon envoya ce message à Hiram : "(...) Maintenant ordonne que l'on me coupe des arbres du Liban ; mes serviteurs seront avec tes serviteurs (...))." »

⁷⁴ Sur ce sujet, cf. D. Potts, *Mesopotamian Civilization. The Material Foundations*, 1997, p. 109.

tique semble avoir consisté à fédérer les puissances du Zagros, de l'Élam et aux Goutis. Chacun des deux rois campa sur sa position, refusant d'admettre sa faute. Il est clair que, finalement, ce fut Iluni qui eut impérativement besoin de l'aide d'Inzuršakšu. De l'aveu d'Iluni, l'échange épistolaire n'améliora pas leurs rapports. Pour rétablir l'entente, Iluni proposa donc une rencontre à Alman par serviteurs interposés (n° 3 : PM 51). L'urgence du moment explique sans doute l'impossibilité d'une rencontre directe entre les princes. Iluni était sur le point de partir en expédition. Ce qu'il souhaitait sans le dire nettement c'était que son allié se déployât à sa frontière à Alman et que dans ce lieu leurs ambassadeurs respectifs règlent pour eux les problèmes relationnels entre Ešnunna et Niqqum. L'espoir d'Iluni était de voir l'armée de Niqqum se joindre à la sienne. Le traité entre les deux pays devait fonctionner cette fois, car Iluni précisait que son ennemi l'avait menacé d'une attaque imminente.

Hadan-huha, Kakmûm et les Goutis

Dans le cadre de la diplomatie active que menait Iluni, la lettre PM n° 4 : 205-bis datée de la fin de l'année du creusement de la Diyala nous apprend qu'il entra en contact avec Hadan-huha. Quoiqu'inconnu jusqu'à présent, c'était visiblement un personnage aussi important qu'Iluni ou Samsu-iluna.

Hadan-huha et Iluni se sont rapprochés l'un de l'autre en raison des *razzia* des Sutéens dont ils ont été victimes tous deux. Les Sutéens étaient des « nomades » qui se livraient notoirement au commerce des esclaves. Ils avaient dû profiter des troubles de la période pour multiplier leurs exactions⁷⁵. La plainte contre eux exprimée dans la lettre n° 4 : PM 205-bis est un aveu de faiblesse de la part d'Ešnunna, incapable de repousser par elle-même les maraudeurs.

⁷⁵ Sur les Sutéens dans la documentation de Mari, cf. H. Reculeau et N. Ziegler, « The Sutean Nomads in the Mari Period », in D. Morandi Bonacossi éd., *Settlement Dynamics and Human-Landscape Interaction in the Dry Steppes of Syria* (Studia Chaburensia, vol. 4), 2014, p. 209-226.

Mais Iluni prouve dans sa lettre toute son ingéniosité. À défaut de s'en prendre directement aux Sutéens, il a cherché à influencer sur le marché même des esclaves afin de bloquer le trafic. En enrayant la demande, il espérait mettre un terme à l'offre. Le roi d'Ešnunna se fit le médiateur entre Hadan-huha et le roi de Babylone Samsu-iluna. En effet, les gens raptés par les Sutéens étaient vendus sur le marché de Babylone⁷⁶. Dès lors, Samsu-iluna pouvait user de son autorité en agissant directement sur le marché babylonien. Or celui-ci répondit favorablement à Iluni. Nous avons déjà proposé, dans un article, de rapprocher le succès de cette démarche d'Iluni d'un fameux édit de Samsu-iluna, connu par une lettre de lui interdisant l'achat d'esclaves issus de l'Ida-Maraş et d'Arrapha⁷⁷.

Pour prouver le lien entre ces documents, il reste à établir une relation entre Arrapha et Hadan-huha. La lettre n° 4 : PM 205-bis contient heureusement un précieux indice. À la fin de la tablette figurent les noms de trois messagers chargés de l'expédition de la lettre. Deux d'entre eux sont des messagers *rakbû*, à l'évidence ešnunnéens⁷⁸. Le troisième homme est originaire de la ville de Kakmûm. Il pourrait s'agir du propre messenger de Hadan-huha. Nous pouvons donc présumer que Hadan-huha était roi de Kakmûm. L'idée est confirmée par une lettre (encore peu connue) du roi Ili-hadnû à son homologue de Šehnā, qui nous apprend que Hadan-huh (= Hadan-huha) résidait à Kakmû⁷⁹.

⁷⁶ La lettre AbB 9 6 donne sans doute un exemple de cette connivence entre l'élite babylonienne et les Soutéens.

⁷⁷ AbB 3 1 ; cf. M. Guichard, « Les rapports entre les régions du Haut-Habur et de l'est du Tigre. Le cas des deux Ida-maraş », L. Marti, Ch. Nicolle & K. Shawaly éd., *Recherches en Haute-Mésopotamie 2. Mission archéologique de Bash Tapa (campagnes 2012-2013) et les enjeux de la recherche dans la région d'Erbil* (Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 17), 2015, p. 37-49 et particulièrement p. 45.

⁷⁸ Le nom Šilli-Tišpak trahit l'origine de l'individu.

⁷⁹ « Dis à Mutiya, ainsi parle Ila-hadnû, ton frère. Mon serviteur que j'avais envoyé chez Hadan-huh (*ha-da-an-hu-uh*) au sujet des pillards-*habbatum*, vient de revenir. Hadan-huh est parti à Arraphum. Kiriya va venir avec une troupe en tant que renfort. Après Kiriya viendra Hadanhuh avec le gros de ses forces. Je crains que mon frère voulant s'illustrer s'approche pour (engager) le combat. Notre allié est proche. En attendant que notre allié arrive, mon frère ne doit absolument rien faire ! En outre, je viens d'envoyer chez mon frère mon servi-

Kakmûm n'est pas précisément localisée mais est à rechercher à l'est d'Arrapha⁸⁰. C'était la capitale des Goutis au 18^e siècle⁸¹. Il n'est pas impossible que Kakmûm ait contrôlé le pays voisin d'Arrapha. Ainsi, la mesure de Samsu-iluna pouvait concerner Iluni, qui contrôlait l'Ida-Maraş, et Hadan-huha, dont l'autorité s'étendait sur le pays d'Arrapha. Le nom de Hadan-huha est hourrite, ce qui convient à un souverain de cette région⁸². Étant donné que Kakmûm fut une capitale goutie, il n'est pas exclu que Hadan-huha soit lui-même un important chef gouti. Quand Iluni indique à Inzuršakšu avoir recherché l'alliance avec les Goutis (n° 3 : PM 51), il pense peut-être à ce même personnage.

Nous ignorons pourquoi Samsu-iluna voulut se montrer agréable à Iluni et à Hadan-huha. Mais il est clair qu'il souhaitait éviter alors un conflit avec ces deux rois.

Les rapports avec Babylone : vers le conflit

Le lettre n° 4 : PM 205-bis montre qu'il y a eu, à un moment donné avant que la guerre ne soit déclarée entre Ešnunna et Babylone, des rapports pacifiques et même un échange de messages entre

teur qui vient de chez le Sire de Kakmû afin que mon frère l'interroge. » D'après la transcription et l'autographie d'A. Tsukimoto. La présence effective de cette armée dirigée par Kiriya (vassal ou subalterne de Hadan-huh[a]) est documentée par plusieurs lettres de Tell Leilan (PIHANS 117 8 et indirectement par n° 7, n° 82, etc).

⁸⁰ Cf. N. Ziegler, « Kakmum et le Gutium », dans L. Marti, Ch. Nicolle & K. Shawaly éd., *Recherches en Haute-Mésopotamie 2. Mission archéologique de Bash Tapa (campagnes 2012-2013) et les enjeux de la recherche dans la région d'Erbil* (Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 17), 2015, p. 23-36.

⁸¹ N. Ziegler, *ibidem*.

⁸² Du type Edip-huh roi de Burundum ; cf. FM VI, p. 150 n. 121 ou Kadiš-huh (M.10475). Dans la documentation de Meturan (Mustafa, *The Old Babylonian Tablets from Me-turan*) on trouve un *ta-al-muš-hu-ha* (n° 6 : 5 ; n° 11 : l. 4) et surtout n° 5 : 2' : *ta-al-muš-hu-ha* lugal šú-da-i (mu bad₃ za-ba-an^{ki} ba-[dim₂]). Pour *huh* ou *huha* « père », cf. Th. Richter, *Bibliographisches Glossar des Hurritischen*, 2012, p. 161.

les deux rois. Iluni souhaitait d'ailleurs établir un accord de paix⁸³, ce qui prouve que ses relations avec Babylone étaient jusque-là distantes.

Pour une raison qui n'apparaît pas du tout dans les documents ici rassemblés, Ešnunna et Babylone finirent par s'affronter. Leurs rapports peuvent s'être dégradés rapidement après l'année (du creusement) de la Diyala. Aussi est-il très probable que l'ennemi qui menace Iluni d'une attaque à la saison de la moisson soit Sam-su-iluna (n° 3 : PM 51). Toutefois celui-ci a souligné dans son discours officiel que c'était Iluni l'agresseur plein de violence. Quoi qu'il en soit, les deux visions s'accordent sur un point, Iluni tenta de constituer une coalition allant des Élamites aux Goutis. Mais il n'est pas certain qu'il soit parvenu à les faire venir sur le champ de bataille. La lettre (malheureusement très abîmée) de Tab-tamnu, un autre prince allié d'Iluni⁸⁴, date de cette période. Celui-ci mène une guerre (peut-être au sud d'Aššur) avec le soutien militaire d'Iluni. Après une moisson (qui pourrait correspondre à celle qui est anticipée dans PM 51), il réclame un supplément de troupe tout en craignant qu'Iluni ne trouve un prétexte dans une affaire où Babylone est mentionnée. Il est très probable qu'il soit question du conflit qui a éclaté entre Ešnunna et Babylone. Tab-tamnu indique cependant avoir rendu service à son allié en ayant infligé un coup à son ennemi, peut-être donc à Babylone⁸⁵.

Finalement, Iluni mena lui-même son armée à Dunnum, une place forte difficile à identifier pour l'heure, car le toponyme est banal. L'affrontement entre les deux armées eut lieu entre la Diyala et le Ṭaban, c'est-à-dire sur le terrain d'Iluni ou à sa frontière, ce qui suggère qu'il était alors en situation défensive⁸⁶.

⁸³ N° 4 : PM 205-bis : 12

⁸⁴ Le ton de sa lettre ne laisse guère de doute sur le rang du personnage.

⁸⁵ La publication de ses lettres par J. Miller permettra d'en savoir plus sur lui.

⁸⁶ « Les rapports entre les régions du Haut Habur et de l'est du Tigre. Le cas des deux Ida-maraš », L. Marti et Ch. Nicolle & K. Shawaly éd., *Recherches en Haute Mésopotamie 2. Mission archéologique de Bash Tapa (campagnes 2012-2013) et les enjeux de la recherche dans la région d'Erbil* (Mémoires de N.A.B.U. 17), 2015, p. 44.

Les textes

n° 1 : PM 204

Iluni à Inzuršakšu. I. réclame une aide pour obtenir du bois dans la région de Dêr. Il manque de troupe, celle-ci étant occupée à colmater les brèches sur le Ṭaban. Une solution est proposée concernant des objets dont la production a déplu à Inzuršakšu.

- 2 *a-na in-zu-ur-ša-[ak-šu qí-bí-ma]*
um-ma diġir-ni ʿra-im ʿ[ka-a-m]a
ᵈutu ù ᵈtišpak da-ri-iš u₄-mi
/ li-ba-al-li-tú-ka
 4 *aš-šum ġiš^{ha₂} ta-aš-li-li*
ša aš-ta-ap-pa-ra-ak-kum-ma
 6 *ġiš^{ha₂} šu-nu-ti a-ia-am-mu tu-ka-al-li-mu*
ki-ma ti-du-ú
 8 *erin₂^{meš} ša ṭà-ra-di-im a-na BAD₃.AN^{ki}*
aṭ-ṭà-ra-ad
 10 *i-na a-ah i₇ ṭà-ba-an bi-it-qá-tum bu-ut-tu-qá-ma*
erin₂^{meš} gu-um-mu-ur-ma bi-it-qá-tim ši-na-ti
 12 *ú-ta-ak-ka-lu*
šum-ma i-na ki-na-tim ta-ra-ma-an-ʿni ʿ
 14 *ʿerin₂ ʿ^{meš} i-ʿdi-in ʿ[ma ġiš^{ha₂} ...]-ʿnim[?] ʿ*
ʿiš-tu ʿ[a]l-ma-an [(o)]^{ki} ʿ
 16 *a-na ʿter[?] ʿ-q[ā^ki][?] li-[i]š-šu-nim*
i-na q[a-at ʿr-di-ia l]i[?]-iš-ku-nu-ma
 18 *a-na [še-ri-ia li-i]ṭ-ru-dam-ma*
ġiš^h[^{a₂} šu-nu]-ti li-iš-šu-nim
 20 *ʿerin₂^{meš}-ia[?] ʿ pa-hi-ir*
a[t-ta] ú-ul ti-[d]e
 22 *[erin₂^{meš} ša] ṭà-ra-di-im*
l[a ta-ka l]a um-ta-ha-[a]r[?]
 24 *šu[m-m]a-ma-an ki-ma a-na-[ku]*
ʿaš[?]-t[a-n]a-ap-pa-ra-k[um]
 26 *at-[ta] a-na ia-ši-ʿim ʿ*
ta-aš-pu-ra-am

- 28 *iš-tu ma-ti-ma-a-an*
ġiš ¹šú¹-ul-lu-lam ú-ul ú-ša-qí-ir-ma
30 *ġiš*^{ha₂} ú-ul ú-ša-bi-la-ku[m]
(Tranche anépigraphie.)
R. *ši-pí-ir erin₂*^{meš} *ša i-ip-pé-šu*
32 *u₄ 1-kam li-in-na-di-ma*
ġiš^{ha₂} *šu-nu-ti li-ib-lu-nim*
34 *aš-šum* ^{ġiš}*i-na-tim ša ú-ša-bi-la-kum*
i-in-ka la im-hu-ra-ma
36 *ta-aš-pu-ra-am*
¹*it-ti*¹ *ša-am-hu-um*
38 *iš-te-en šu-ha-ar-ka*
ša *ġiš*^{ha₂} *i-du-ú*
40 *li-il-li-kam-ma*
i-na *ġiš*^{ha₂} *ma-du-tim li-is-su-uq-ma*
42 ^{ġiš}*i-na-tim dam-qá-tim*
*li-<iš>-*¹*ter-sà*¹-a-kum

(Espace blanc.)

ġiri₃ ša-am-hu-um dumu ¹*x-x-x-a*¹

(Espace blanc.)

iti ki-in-kum u₄ 20-kam

mu alam ^d*ġešt*ⁱⁿ-an-na

¹⁻² [Dis] à Inzuršakšu, ainsi parle Iluni, ton ami.

³ Puissent Šamaš et Tišpak te préserver en vie éternellement.

⁴ Au sujet du bois de charpente ⁵ à propos de quoi je ne cesse de t'écrire et ⁶ de ces arbres que tu as montrés à Ayyamu, ⁷ comme tu le sais, ⁸⁻⁹ je venais d'envoyer la troupe autant qu'il en fallait à Dēr.

¹⁰ Sur la rive du Ṭaban, des brèches se sont (alors) produites et ¹¹ la troupe est entièrement occupée ¹² à assurer (la consolidation) de ces brèches.

¹³ Si en vérité, tu m'aimes, ¹⁴ Donne(-moi) de la troupe et [... les arbres]. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶ Qu'ils me (les) portent d'Alman à Terqa. ¹⁷ Qu'ils (les) remettent à [la main de mon serviteur], afin ¹⁸ qu'il me les envoie [chez moi], ¹⁹ ou qu'ils me portent (directement) ces arbres. ²⁰ Ma

troupe est rassemblée.²¹ [Toi], ne le savais-tu pas ?²²⁻²³ Ne [retiens] pas [la troupe] à envoyer. *Dois-je en faire la demande plusieurs fois ?*

²⁴ Si, tandis que moi-même ²⁵ je dois t'écrire encore et encore, ²⁶ toi, tu m'avais écrits, ²⁸ depuis combien de temps ²⁹ n'aurais-je pas abattu du bois de charpente et ³⁰ ne le t'aurais-je pas fait porter ? ³¹⁻³² Il faudrait (donc) que le travail de la troupe qui a à le faire soit abattu⁸⁷ en un seul jour et ³³ qu'ils me portent (tout aussitôt) ces arbres.

³⁴ Au sujet des moyeux (de roue) que je t'ai fait porter et ³⁵ qui ne te conviennent pas ³⁶ tu m'as écrit. ³⁷⁻⁴⁰ Qu'un serviteur à toi qui s'y connaît en matière d'arbre vienne avec Šamhum et ⁴¹ qu'il (en) choisisse au sein des nombreux arbres ⁴³ en sorte qu'il te prépare (?) de bons moyeux (de roue).

Intermédiaire : Šamhum fils de ...

Le 20/XII. Année où la statue de Ġeštinana (a été fabriquée).

l. 4 : CAD T ʔašlilu, p. 284 donne au terme le sens précis de « portique ». À Mari, on emploie des poutres pour faire le *tašlilum* de la cour du palmier (LAPO 17 845 [ARM XIII 40]). Il n'est pas exclu que le terme ait le même sens ici, mais ce n'est peut-être qu'un synonyme de *tašliltum* « toiture ».

l. 10 : *buttuqum* « couper », « abattre » un arbre est attesté ; cf. CAD B batāqum, p. 164. Deux exemples avec *butuqātim buttuqum* sont cités : (1) SAA 8 250 : r. 5-8 : *kīma Sîn antallê ištaknu šarru lišpurma ana pūhi šarri buttuqāti* (A.MAH.MEŠ) *ina māt Akkad ina mūši lubattiq mamma lā išemmi* « Lorsque la lune aura produit une éclipse, que le roi écrive pour que le substitut du roi provoque une inondation par l'ouverture de brèches la nuit à Akkad. Nul ne doit l'apprendre. » (2) YOS 10 : iv, l. 46 donne comme présage : *lu₂-kur₂^{-rum} bu-tu-qá-tim ú-ba-at-ta-qá-ak-kum* « L'ennemi provoquera une inondation par l'ouverture de brèches contre toi. »

Ces exemples peuvent indiquer que les brèches ont pu être provoquées par des ennemis d'Iluni, mais comme il ne les évoque pas du tout, il semble plutôt que la cause des dommages soit d'origine naturelle. Pour ce thème, cf. B. Lafont, « Nuit dramatique à Mari », *FM* [1] (Mémoires de NABU 1), 1991, p. 93-101.

⁸⁷ Lit. « jeté ». Le français peut coller à l'akkadien.

l. 20 : Iluni veut dire que sa troupe est complètement mobilisée à autre chose.

l. 23 : pour ce sens de *muhhurum*, cf. CAD M/1, p. 61.

l. 34 : pour *inum* moyeu de char, cf. CAD I/J inum, p. 157. Inzuršakšu veut bénéficier du savoir-faire d'Ešnunna. Le problème de la production qui ne l'a pas satisfait vient apparemment du matériau utilisé. On remarquera qu'*inum* (distinct de *inum* dans CAD) désigne un instrument de musique.

n° 2 : PM 205

Iluni à Inzuršakšu. Iluni réagit à l'accusation de son allié d'avoir enfreint son serment en ne lui envoyant pas l'aide militaire demandée et lui retourne l'accusation. Il ne veut pas s'impliquer dans l'attaque que son allié projette.

- [a]-na in-zu-ur-ša-ak-šu ʾqí-bí-m[a]
- 2 um-ma diġir-ni ra-im-ka-ma
^dutu ù ^dtišpak da-ri-iš ʾu₄-mi¹ li-ba-al-li-tú-ka
- 4 aš-šum ša ta-[aš]-[pu-ra-am¹ um-ma at-ta-ma
 [i]-[nu¹]-[m]a² elam-m[a o o] ʾx x¹-[t]i-ia it-bi-a-am⁸⁸
- 6 [a-na] erin₂ ti-il-la-ti[m aš]-pu-ra-ak-kum-ma
 [erin₂] ú-ul ta-aṭ-ru-dam i-ta ni-iš diġir-ka te-te-ti-iq
- 8 [<ša> ta-aš]-[pu¹-ra^o a-na-ku-ú mu-ru-uš li-ib-bi-ia ma-du-um
 i-ba-aš-ši-ma <aš-šum lu₂-kur₂ a-na-k[u² aš-tap-r]a²-[kum²]¹
^{8b}ki-am aš-ta-al um-ma a-na-ku-ma i-nu-ma ʾte-e-GI¹-[tum(?)]
^{8c}a-wa-tim an-ni-a-tim lu-uš-pu-ʾur-šum¹
^{8d}ʾa¹-ni-tam aq-bi at-ta tu-ʾuz²-[zi-iz-ma]
^{8e}[t]a-aš-tap-ra-am>
- [aš-šum ^dtiš]ʾpak²⁷ a-na-ku i-it^o ni-iš diġir-ia ú-ul e-ti-iq
- 10 [at-t]a² i-ta ni-iš diġir-ka te-ti-i[q]
 [ù i]-na-an-na a-na la da-mi-iq²⁸⁹-tim-ma
- 12 [a-na] ma-tim an-ni-tim e-pé-ši-[im]
 [pa]-nu-k[a] ša-ak-nu-m[a²]

⁸⁸ Suite au revers !

⁸⁹ Ou bien *qá*.

- 14 [o o] x x-tim tu-ša-ak-x[...]
 [o]-x ni-iš diğir-ia ʾa-naʾ x [...]
 16 [a-w]a-a-tim ʾi-naʾ ʾmaʾ-tim-ma x[...]
 T. [o] NI NA xʾ [...]
 18 ʾxʾ ša [...]
 (Ligne blanche ?)
 R. [i-na-an-n]aʾ i-na ma-tim [an-ni-tim]
 20 [ki]-ma ni-iṭ-li-ka [e-pé-eš]

¹⁻² Dis à Inzuršakšu, ainsi parle Iluni, ton ami.

³ Que Šamaš et Tišpak te préservent en vie éternellement. ⁴ Au sujet de ce que tu m'as écrit disant : ⁵ « *Quand l'Élamite m'a attaqué [dans] mon [...],* ⁶ je t'ai écrit pour (obtenir) une troupe de renfort, mais ⁷ tu ne m'as pas envoyé [de troupe]. Tu as enfreint dès lors ton serment divin. » ⁸ [Ce que] tu m'as écrit, de mon côté, cela suscite beaucoup de colère en moi. ^{ajout} < Car au sujet de l'ennemi moi-même je venais de t'écrire. ^{8b-c} J'ai pensé ainsi : « Je lui écris ce genre de choses (uniquement) lorsque (il y a) une *objection (justifiée)* ». ^{8d} J'ai dit cela. Toi-même, tu t'es mis très en colère [et] ^{8e} tu m'as écrit. ⁹ Par Tišpak, moi je n'ai pas enfreint mon serment divin. ¹⁰ (C'est toi (qui) as enfreint ton serment divin.

¹¹⁻¹³ À présent, tu envisages de faire à ce pays un mauvais coup et ¹⁴ tu ... ¹⁵ ... Mon serment divin ... ¹⁶ [...] des mots ... ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ ... ¹⁹⁻²⁰ [À présent], [agis] dans [ce] pays selon ta façon de voir.

Note : ce document appelle plusieurs remarques. On note que les coins sont arrondis à la manière d'un texte d'exercice ou d'un mémorandum. La ligne 8 devient brusquement télégraphique (ce qui rend bien l'expression de la colère) ; un paragraphe entier a été ajouté et inséré au début du message une fois le premier jet écrit, il se prolonge donc sur le revers d'une manière peu habituelle.

l. 5 : cette ligne est essentielle à la compréhension de l'ensemble du texte mais elle est malheureusement abîmée. Soit Inzuršakšu évoque une attaque contre lui et il a réclamé une troupe de secours à Iluni qui ne l'a pas envoyée, soit au contraire Inzuršakšu a voulu ou veut mener une attaque contre un ennemi et a sollicité en vain un renfort. On pourrait en effet comprendre la fin du passage ʾitʾ-[t]i-ia it-bi-am « il s'est levé avec moi » en référence à un autre allié. Cela concorderait avec la

fin du texte où Iluni exprime sa réticence à l'égard d'un projet d'attaque de roi de Niqqum (il peut aussi s'agir bien sûr d'un projet de contre-offensive). La mention de l'Élam est hypothétique (pour la graphie elamma, cf. aussi n° 3 : PM 51 : l. 23) puisque l'on pourrait aussi restituer [a-na] « *mi^l-nim* bien que l'articulation avec ce qui suit semblerait moins claire. Dans n° 3 : PM 51 indique à Inzuršakšu qu'il recherche l'alliance avec l'Élam, ce qui peut expliquer son manque d'enthousiasme à s'impliquer dans les affaires de son allié.

l. 8 : J.-M. Durand me suggère une restitution différente [à a-m]u-ra « Regarde moi ! » ce qui rendrait bien le sentiment de scandale qu'exprime Iluni.

l. 8b : pour *tēkītum* dans le cadre d'un traité d'alliance, cf. J. Eidem, *The Royal Archives from Tell Leilan* (PIHANS 117), 2011, p. 389 : *inūma Yamši-hatnū mār Asdi-ne'im šar Kahat šābam irrišannēti šābam damqam lā nikallušu tēkītum lā nippalušu* « Lorsque Yamši-hatnu le fils d'Asdi-ne'im, le roi de Kahat, nous réclamera de la troupe, nous jurons de ne pas garder (pour nous) la meilleure troupe, nous jurons de ne pas faire d'objection en retour ! » (traité entre Till-Abnū et Yamši-hatnū, L.T.-3 ii : 10-14).

l. 20 : pour cette expression, cf. CAD N/2, p. 302.

n° 3 : PM 51

Iluni à Inzuršakšu. Iluni propose à son allié un colloque pour régler leur contentieux du côté d'Alman, tandis que lui-même doit se rendre à Dunnum. Son ennemi lui a déclaré la guerre et l'a menacé de faire une expédition contre lui au printemps. Du coup, Ešnunna a demandé de l'aide auprès des Goutis et de l'Élam.

- [a-na in-z]u-ur-ša-ak-š[u qí-bí-ma]
 2 [um-ma] diğir-ni ra-im-k[a-m]a
 [dutu u^d]tišpak da-ri-iš u₄-mi li-ba-al-li-tú-ka
 4 [a-na-k]u⁹⁰ ki-a-am aš-pu-ra-ak-kum um-ma um-ma a-na-ku-ma
 [i^l]-šar-iš-šu li-il-li-kam-ma
 6 [mu-ru]-uš li-ib-bi ša i-na bi-ri-ni i-ba-aš-šu-ú

⁹⁰ Il manque de la place pour *ina panītim-ma*.

- [li]-in-na-me-er
 8 an-ni-tam aš-pu-ra-ak-kum
 i-na-an-na ¹i-šar-iš-šu i-il-la-kam-ma
 10 i-na ru-qí-iš ši-ta-ap-pu-ri-im
 mu-ru-uš li-ib-bi-ni ú-ul ig-ga-am-ma-ar
 12 iti an-nu-ú-um i-qá-at-ti-ma
 i-na iti e-re-bi-im a-na du-un-nim^{ki} a-al-la-a[k]
 14 ù at-ta a-na al-ma-an^{ki} qú-ur-ri-ba-am
 [w]a-ar-du-ni bi-ri-ni li-it-ta-al-la-[ku[?]]-ma
 16 [m]u-ru-uš li-ib-bi-i[m] ša bi-ri-ni i-ba-aš-šu-ú
 [l]i-in-na-me-er
 18 [a]t-ta ti-di ki-ma [na-a]k[?]-ri ge-ri-a-an-ni
 [ù] am-ša-li ki-a-am iš-pu-ra-am um-ma šu-ú-ma
 20 [o] iš-tu i-na-an-na iti 3-kam
 ʾa¹-di e-bu-ri-im mi-nu-um
 22 an-ni-tam iš-pu-ra-am
 a-na-ku a-na gu-ti-i ù elam-ma ti-il-la-t[im]
 24 [aš]-ta-pa-ar
 [o o o]x ʾe₄-mi-im i-šu-ú
 26 [o o o a-w]a[?]-tim mi-im-ma
 (Lacune.)

- R. [...] - ʾma[?] ʾ ba-lum š[a...]
 2' [...]x Bu [...] [ʾ...š]i-im ú-u[l...]
 4' [...] ta-qá-ab-[bi...] [...] - ʾi^{??} ʾ - ʾiD¹ aD-ha-a-x[...] 6'
 [mi-im-ma ba]-lu-uk-ka ú-ul e-t[e[?]-pé-eš]
 [ki-ma ša aš]-pu-ra-ak-ku[m]
 8' [at-ta a-na] al-ma-an^{ki} [ú-lu a-na o[?]]-bu-ú-ur^{ki}
 10' [qú-ur]-ri-ba-am-ma [ka-l]a (?) ša in-ne-ep-pí-šu
 12' [lu]-uq-bi-a-ak-kum

¹⁻² Dis à Inzuršakšu, ainsi parle Iluni, ton ami.

³ Que Šamaš et Tišpak te gardent en vie pour des jours sans fin.

⁴ Moi je t'ai (déjà) écrits ainsi : ⁵ « Qu'Išar-iššu vienne et ⁶⁻⁷ que soit

exposé le différend qu'il y a entre nous. » ⁸ Voilà ce que je t'ai écrit. ⁹ À présent, Išar-iššu doit venir car ¹⁰⁻¹¹ (sinon) notre différend ne se terminera (jamais) avec une correspondance aussi vaine.

¹² Ce mois-ci arrive à son terme et ¹³ au cours du mois prochain je compte aller à Dunnum. ¹⁴ Quant à toi, approche-toi d'Alman ! ¹⁵ Que nos serviteurs s'en aillent *d'entre nous* ¹⁶⁻¹⁷ en sorte que soit exposé le différend qu'il y a entre nous.

¹⁸ Toi même tu sais que mon ennemi me fait la guerre. ¹⁹ Or, hier il m'a écrit ainsi : ²⁰⁻²¹ « ... À partir de maintenant il y a trois mois (seulement) jusqu'à la moisson, qu'est-ce donc ? » ²² Voilà ce qu'il m'a écrit. ²³⁻²⁴ Alors moi j'ai aussitôt écrit pour (avoir) un secours gutéen et élamite. ... (Passage lacunaire).

... ⁶ *Sans ton accord, je ne fe[rai rien]*. ⁷ Comme je te l'ai écrit, ^{8'-10'} toi-même approche-toi d'Alman ou bien de Būr⁷ ^{11'-12'} pour que je te dise tout (?) ce qui doit être fait.

l. 5 : ce personnage est l'auteur d'une lettre adressée à son seigneur, sans doute Iluni (CUNES 53-02-141).

l. 14 : cette ville (à nouveau mentionnée l. 8') est présente dans une *Tamītu* (texte n° 4 : Lambert, *Babylonian Oracle Questions*, 2007, p. 64-65) relative à une expédition babylonienne passant par Dūr-Šulgi, puis par la passe de Tengurgur pour arriver au pays de kur *hal-man* (= Alman?). L'ennemi désigné est le Lullubéen. Cf. ci-dessus, p. 31.

n° 4 : PM 205-bis

Iluni à Hadan-huha. I. annonce que le roi de Babylone a répondu favorablement à leur plainte commune concernant les rapines des Sutéens.

	[a-na] ha-da-an-hu-ha
2	qí-bí-ma
	um-ma diġir-ni-ma
4	i-na pa-ni-tim še-eh-tú-um
	ša ^{lu₂} su-ti-i ^{meš}
6	i-na li-ib-bu ^o ma-tim iš-hi-iṭ-ma

- aš-šum še-eh-ti-im šu-a-tu
 8 a-na ka₂-diĝir-ra^{ki} aš-pu-ur
 'sa-am-su-i-lu-na
 10 a-wa-tim dam-qa-tim
 iš-pu-ra-am-「ma」¹
 12 「a」¹-[na] 「sa」²-[li]-「mi」¹-im
 a-na ka₂-diĝir-ra^{ki}
 14 aš-ta-pa-ar

 (Tranche anépigraphie.)
 lu-ú ti-de

 16 ĝiri₃ bu-hu-um ra-gab
 'šil-lí-^dtišpak ra-gab
 18 'ib-ni-ia a₂-「x」 / lu₂ ka-ak-mi^{ki}

 iti ki-iš-ki-iš-šum u₄-20-kam
 20 mu diĝir-ni lugal-e
 i₇-dur-ul₃ niĝ₂-ha-lam-ma-ta
 22 ka ba-uš₂-a
 mu-un-ba-al-la₂

¹⁻³ Dis à Hadan-huha, ainsi parle Iluni.

⁴ Auparavant, une attaque ⁵ de Sutéens ⁶ à l'intérieur du pays s'est produite. ⁷ J'ai écrit à Babylone au sujet de cette attaque. ⁹ Samsu-iluna ¹⁰⁻¹¹ m'a écrit des paroles bienveillantes. ¹²⁻¹⁴ Je viens d'écrire à Babylone *pour établir un pacte de paix (?)*. ¹⁵ Tu es au courant !

¹⁶ Intermédiaires : Buhum cavalier, ¹⁷ Šillī-Tišpak cavalier, ¹⁸ Ibniya... originaire de Kakmûm.

¹⁹ Le 20/XI. ²⁰⁻²² Année où Iluni le roi a creusé la Diyala dont l'embouchure s'était obstruée suite à la catastrophe.

l. 13 : L'identité de cette ville, Dunnum « la Forteresse », reste indéterminée, ce toponyme étant banal. Un rapprochement avec la Dunnum que documentent les textes Uruk dirigés par Rīm-Anum (an 1 = S-i 9) n'est pas exclu. Il s'agit manifestement d'une puissante cité qui entretenait des rapports diplomatiques avec Uruk parallèlement au Muti-

abal⁹¹, au Gutium⁹² ou d'autres États. Néanmoins, il peut s'agir dans le présent contexte d'une simple forteresse à la frontière d'Ešnunna.

l. 18 : la lecture aga-us₂ est exclue ; il pourrait s'agir du suméro-gramme pour *alīk idi* « accompagnateur ».

n° 5 : PM 203

Tabtamnu à Iluni. Ṭabtamnu réclame de la troupe mais craint un refus déguisé de la part d'Iluni. Fin lacunaire.

- [a-na] {x} i-lu-ni qí-bí-ma
 2 u[m-ma] {「x」}⁹³ tá-ab-ta-am-「nu」-ma
 [at-ta]-「a」-ma ti-i-di
 4 [ki-ma] ṣa-bu-um a-na e-bu-ri-šu
 「na」-sú-hu-ma e-bu-ur-šu i-pu-šu
 6 [k]i-ma ṭup-pí te-eš-te-mu-ú
 [1+[?]]1 me ṣa-ba-am wa-at-ta-ar-tam
 8 ṭú-ur-da-am-ma
 u₄ 10-kam 5 u₄^l-kam⁹⁴
 10 a⁹⁵-di u₄-um a-qa-ab-bu-ú
 [m]a-ah-ri-ia li-iš-bu
 T. 12 [ù] 「as」[?]「su」-「re」[?]「ta」-qa-ab-bi
 [um-ma a]t[?]-ta[?]-a[?]-ma[?]
 14 [o o o o k]a₂-diġir-ra「ki」
 R. [o o o o]x šú-ub-bu-tu
 16 [ki-a-am ta]-pa-la-an-ni
 [a-na-ku na-ka]-a[r]-ka am-ta-ha-aṣ

⁹¹ l.28 dans A. Rositani, *Rīm-Anum Texts in the British Museum*, 2003, p. 13, p. 80. La mention de gens de Muti-abal doit illustrer les divisions internes à ce pays, certains préférant se rallier à Babylone et Uruk.

⁹² l.39 ; l.66 : A. Rositani, *ibidem*, p. 13. Curieusement, les dernières études sur la révolte de Rīm-Anum ne donnent aucun éclairage sur l'identification de cette Dunnum. A. Rositani s'est contentée de renvoyer à RGTC et A. Seri n'aborde nulle part ce point.

⁹³ Il pourrait s'agir de i, mais le signe paraît avoir été effacé. On relève aussi un repentir à la ligne au dessus.

⁹⁴ Faute pour u₄ 5-kam.

⁹⁵ Sur signe effacé.

- 18 [o o o o k]i-ma iš-te-mu-ú
[o o]x-ka-aš-「ša²-da²」-ka
20 [ù ša-ba-a]m ša aš-pu-ra-ak-「kum」
[ar-h]i-iš t[ú]-ur-da-[am]
22 [o] 「lu₂」^{meš} ša sú-q[a-qí-im^{ki} (?)]
li-du-ru na- [...]
24 [k]i-a-am li-iq-b[u um-ma]
[o ?] ki-na-tim [...]
T. 26 [o o o] -「x」iš-ta-a-a[t²⁹⁶ o]
[o o] x ša-du^{ki} im-ra¹⁹⁷-ša
28 [o o] 「an²-né-tum²」li-「id²-da²-bu²」-[ba (?)]]

¹⁻² Dis à Iluni, ainsi parle Tabtamnu. ³⁻⁴ [Toi] tu sais que la troupe a été déplacée pour faire sa moisson et a (déjà) accompli sa moisson. ⁶ Dès que tu auras pris connaissance de ma tablette, ⁷ envoie-moi une troupe supplémentaire de 1'00 hommes, afin qu'ils restent à mon service 5 ou 10 jours jusqu'au jour que j'indiquerai. *Je crains que* tu dises : « Babylone... ils sont équipés... » Voilà ce que tu risques de me répondre. [Moi], je viens de frapper ton [ennemi]. [...] Dès qu'il (l')aura appris, ... Donc donne-moi rapidement la troupe à propos de quoi je t'ai écrit, afin que les gens de *Suqaqum* prennent peur [...]. Qu'ils disent ainsi : « <En> vérité, [...]. Une seule [...]. Les (gens des) montagnes en seront affectés. » Que de telles choses soient dites !

1. 2 : J. Miller doit publier d'autres lettres de ce personnage.

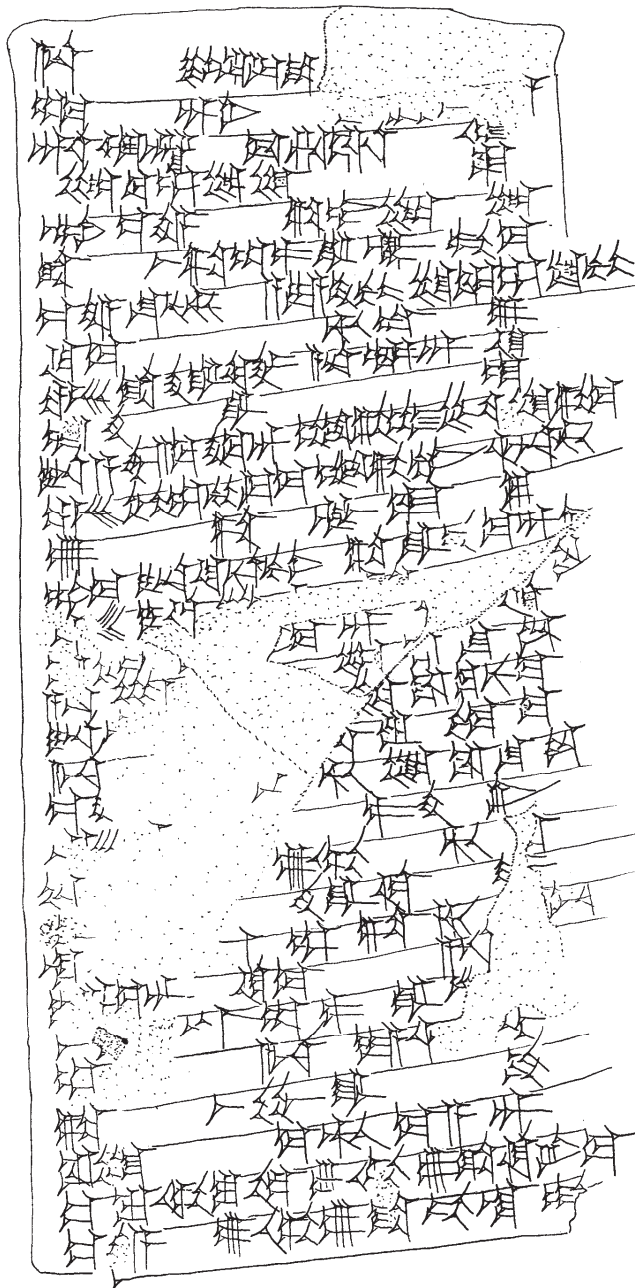
1. 5 : *nassuhū* (NSH IV permansif 3^e pl. masc.).

1. 22 : pour cette ville dans la zone du Tigre, à l'est du Hamrin, cf. B. Groneberg, *RGTC* 3, p. 211. La ville est à une journée en aval d'Aššur selon l'itinéraire de la « route d'Emar », cf. W. Hallo, « The Road to Emar », *JCS* 18, p. 57-88 et spécialement p. 63. Si la restitution est juste, l'indication permettrait de localiser la zone où se trouve Tabtamnu.

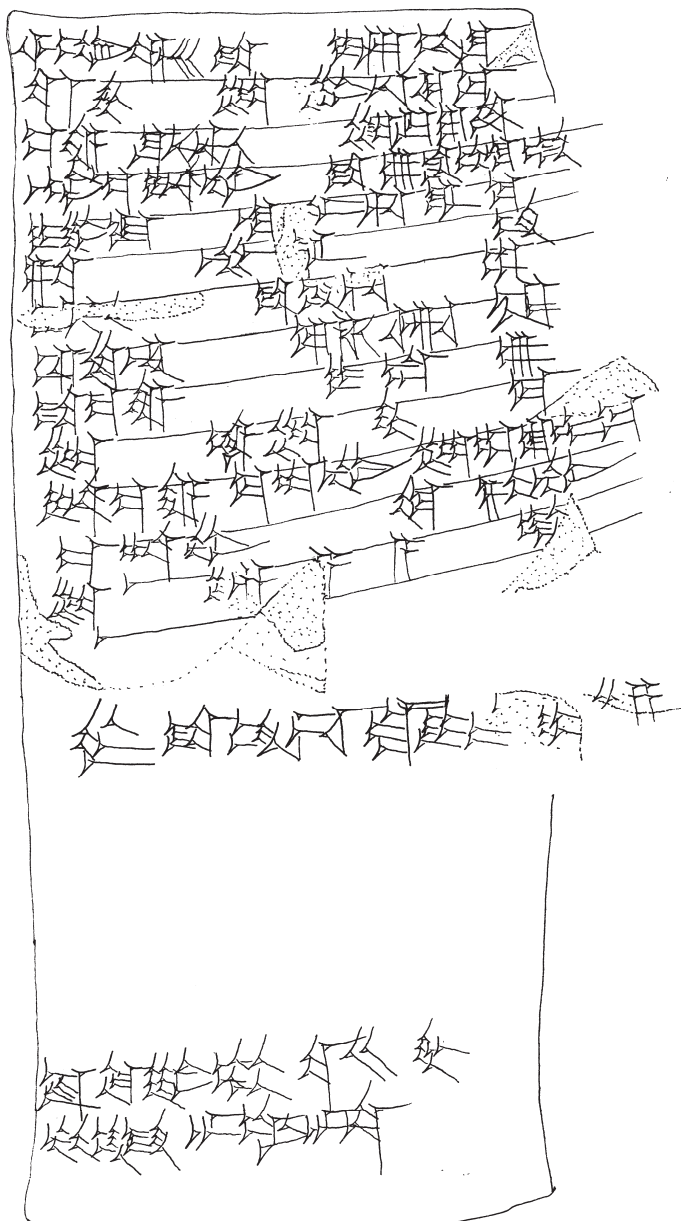
1. 27 : l'auteur pourrait faire allusion notamment à la montagne Ebih.

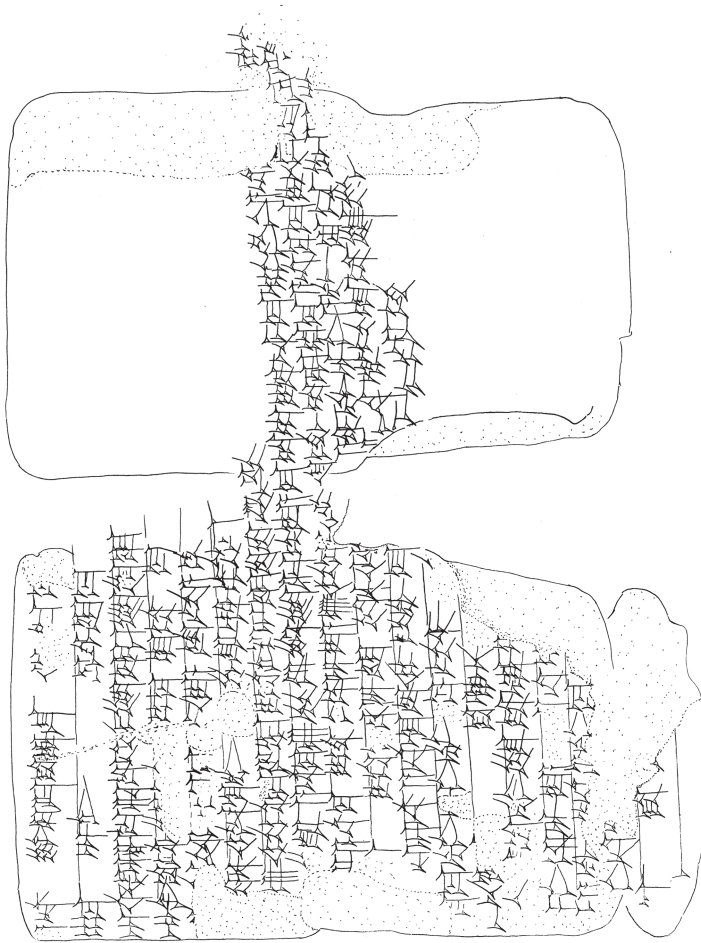
⁹⁶ AL ?

⁹⁷ Le signe ressemble à MAR, mais il s'agit plutôt d'un RA mal dessiné.

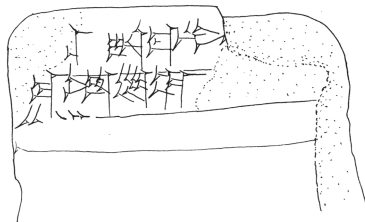


PM 204 face

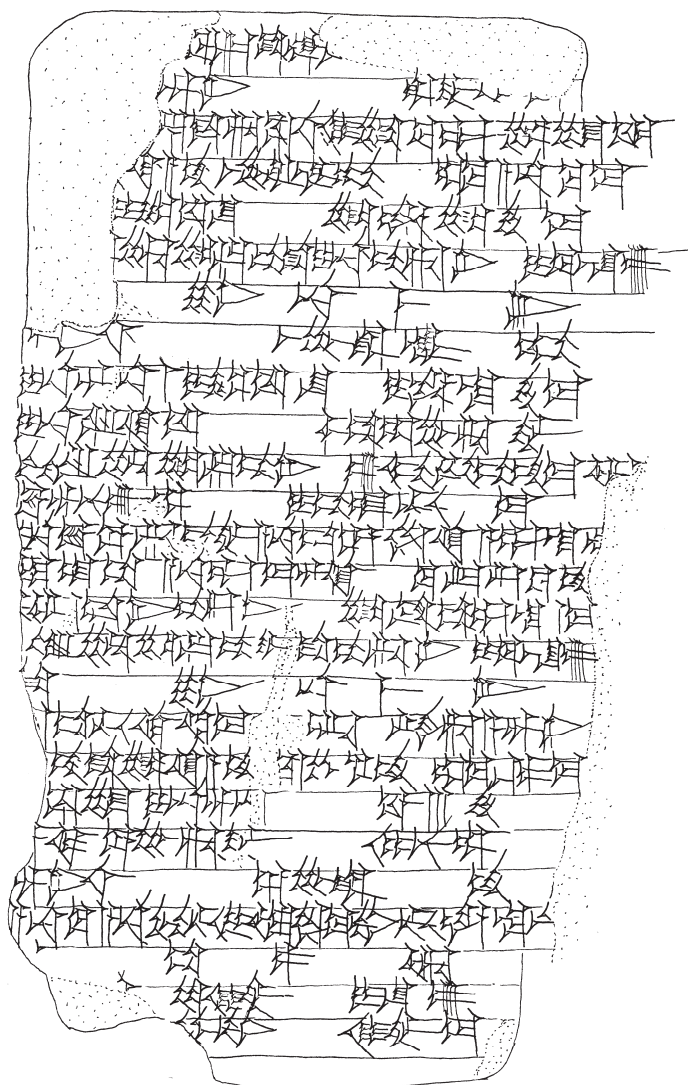




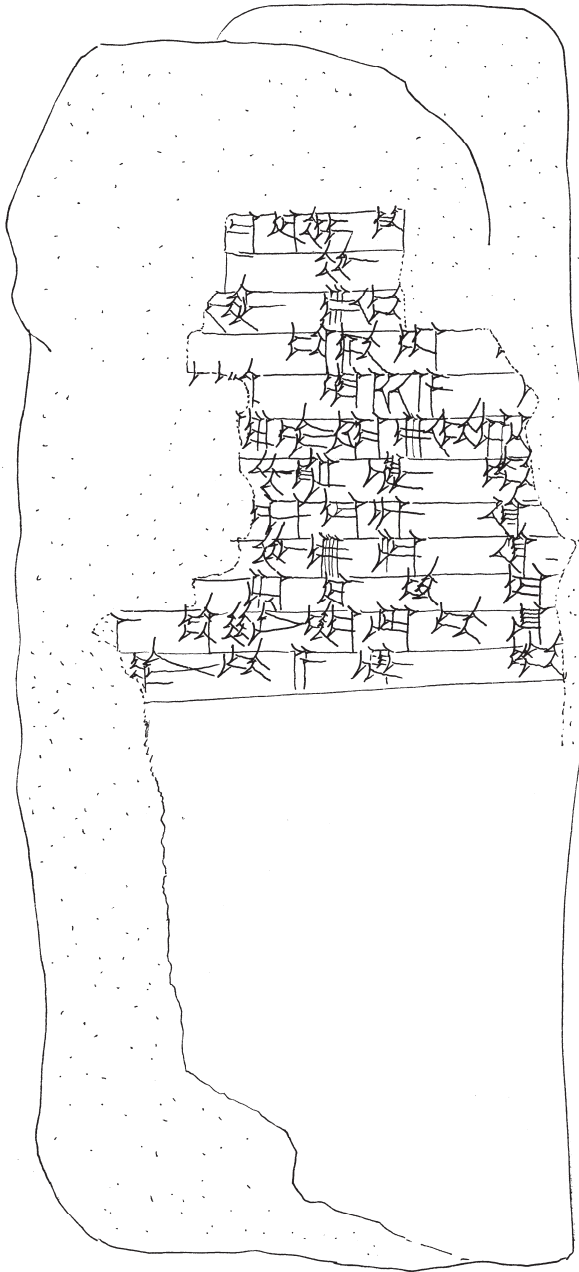
PM 205 face



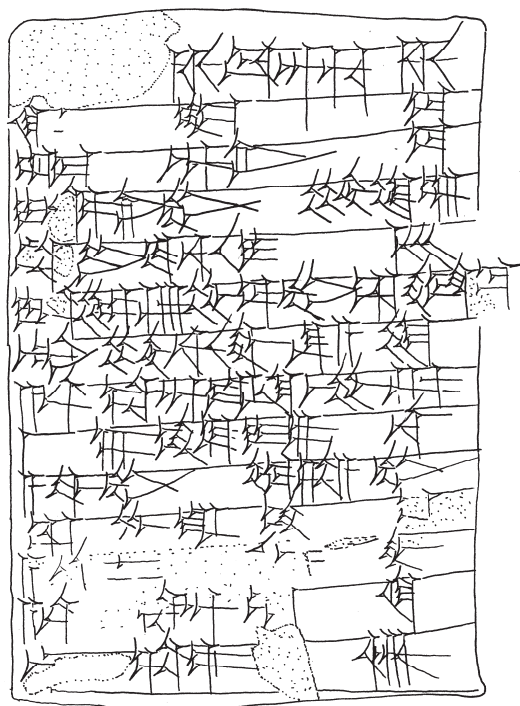
PM 205 revers



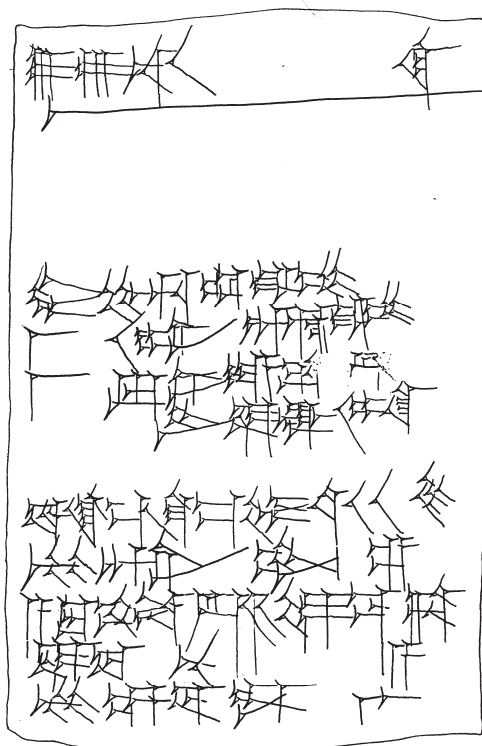
PM 51 face



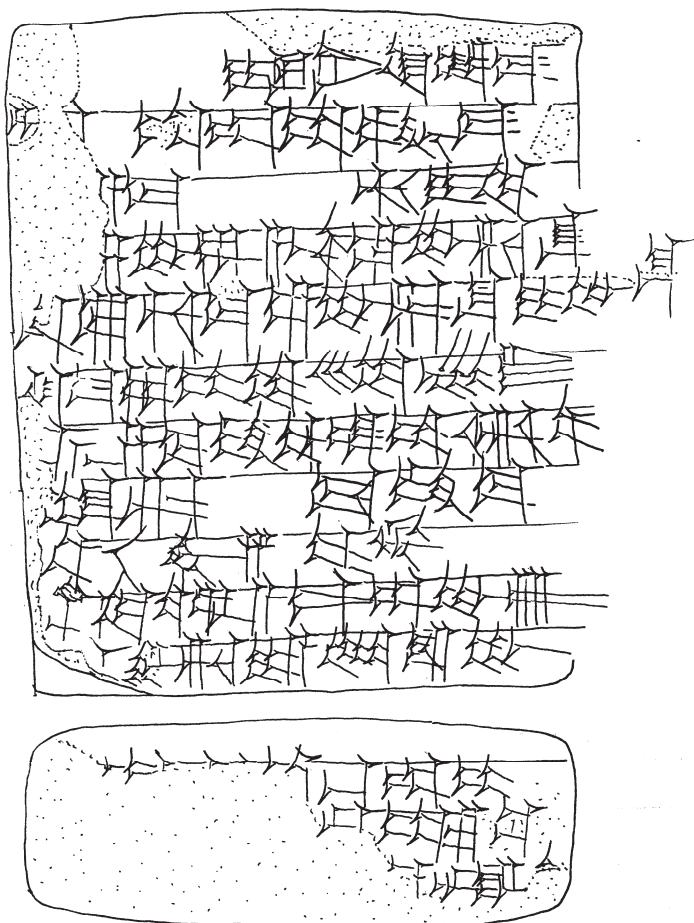
PM 51 revers



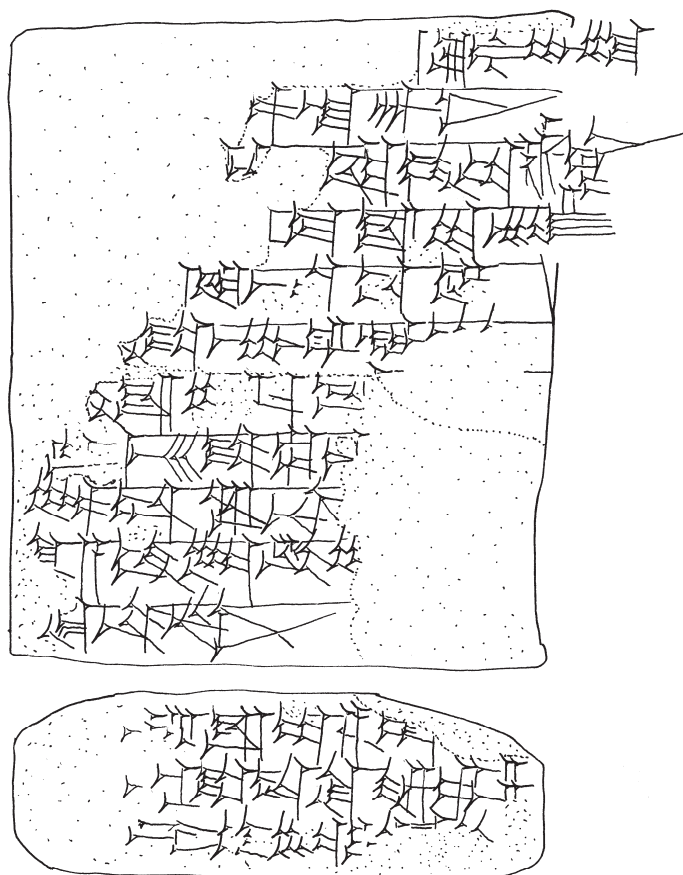
PM 205-bis face



PM 205-bis revers



PM 203 face



PM 203 revers

Who Possessed the Promised Land? Scribal Scholarship in the Formation of Patriarchal Narrative(s) and the Holiness Code

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Résumé. Cet article réagit aux travaux de spécialistes tels Christophe Nihan et Ehud Ben Zvi au sujet de la possession de la terre promise par les patriarches. Nihan estime que l'accomplissement de la promesse faite à Abraham d'une terre « a déjà pris place à l'époque des patriarches, ainsi que l'affirment explicitement Gn 28,4 et 35,12 ». Ben Zvi estime au contraire qu'aucun patriarche n'a possédé la terre promise mentionnée en Gn 17,8. Le présent article adopte cette dernière position et accepte l'argument selon lequel le concept deutéronomiste (D) de terre en tant que נחלה « possession personnelle » a probablement été reconceptualisé par les auteurs sacerdotaux (P) et présenté comme ארצה « possession exclusive de Yahvé. » Étant donné le souci du Code de Sainteté pour la justice sociale, H présente lui aussi la terre comme appartenant à Yahvé seul (cf. Lv 25,23), réfuter ainsi le point de vue des élites à l'époque de l'exil et après selon lequel la terre serait un bien personnel. Ainsi le concept de terre promise de D et P a-t-il été développé par H afin d'imaginer le partage de la terre.

Keywords: Promised Land, patriarchal narratives, Abraham, Holiness Code, social justice, Babylonian period and Persian period

A. Introduction

This paper examines the issue of possession of the Promised Land by the Patriarchs by engaging with the works of scholars such as Christophe Nihan and Ehud Ben Zvi, among others. Nihan holds that the fulfilment of the promise of land made to Abraham “occurred in the age of the Patriarchs, as is explicitly affirmed in Gen

28: 4 and 35: 12.”¹ He argues that the Patriarchs’ entitlement to the land’s usufruct is evident in the case of Abraham purchasing a cave in Machpelah inclusive of the productive land surrounding it as אַחְזָה “Yahweh’s exclusive possession.”² In contrast, Ben Zvi argues that none of the Patriarchs possessed the Promised Land, namely Canaan, which is mentioned in Gen 17: 8.³ Thus, it is clear that there is no convincing consensus on the discussion that the Patriarchs actually possessed the Promised Land.

With respect to the promise of Gen 17, it is interesting that P’s genealogies of Ishmael, Esau and Jacob illustrate the fulfilment of the promise made to a Patriarch. However, the goal of this paper is to probe whether the promise of land was fulfilled at the age of Abraham and at the time of the Judeans in postexilic Yehud. Second, this paper argues that the Deuteronomistic (D) view of the land as נַחֲלָה “a personal possession” was presented by the Priestly authors (P) as אַחְזָה “Yahweh’s exclusive possession.” Third, based on the concern for social justice, it will be argued that the authors of the Holiness Code (H) also presented the land as solely belonging to YHWH (cf. Lev 25: 23), in order to address socio-economic injustice in the economy of ancient Israel. In the end, I will submit that in the postexilic context, H supplemented D and P’s concept of the Promised Land with a view to redress disproportional benefits from the ownership and use of productive land. The discussion in this paper will follow the outline below:

- Promise of Land to Abraham and Judeans
- Land occupation in the Babylonian and Persian periods
- Deuteronomistic and Priestly conceptualisation of the Promised Land
- Promised Land in the Holiness Code

¹ Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 67.

² Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 67.

³ Ehud Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham in Late Persian/Early Hellenistic Yehud/Judah,” in *Remembering Biblical Figures in the Late Persian and Early Hellenistic Periods*, (ed. Diana V. Edelman and Ehud Ben Zvi; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 7-22.

B. The Promise of Land to Abraham and the Judeans

According to Nihan, the view that “the land given to the Israelites in Exod 6: 2-8 does not differ from that given to the Patriarchs” implies that the promise of land made to Abraham was fulfilled in the age of the Patriarchs (cf. Gen 28: 4; 35: 12).⁴ In relating Exod 6: 2-8 to the texts of Gen 28: 4 and 35: 12, it is important to note both the areas of convergence and of divergence. On the issue of convergence, the verb נָתַן “give” that is employed in Exod 6: 4 is noticeable in Gen 28: 4 and 35: 12. Based on Gen 35: 12, the promise of land that was initially made to Abraham and apparently fulfilled extended to his descendants, including the Judeans in the postexilic period. The usage of the verb נָתַן “give” suggests that the land was indeed given to Abraham. Thus, the view that the fulfilment of the promise of land made to Abraham occurred in the age of the Patriarchs appears attractive.

Nihan argues that “the reference to the land given to the Patriarchs in Exod 6: 4, 8 should be understood literally and not as a mere reference to the promise that the land will be given to Abraham’s offspring in the future.”⁵ This argument is inconclusive because there is no evidence that the Patriarchs possessed אֶת-אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן “the land of Canaan”. At the time YHWH instructed Moses to address the Israelites (that is, a period later than the age of the Patriarchs) the textual evidence of Exod 6: 8 shows that YHWH was yet to deliver the Promised Land to the people. The view that the promise of land was already fulfilled therefore is indecisive. Of significance is the noticeable tension on the use of the verb נָתַן “give” in Gen 28: 4; 35: 12 and in Exod 6: 4, 8. In both Gen 28: 4 and 35: 12, the verb נָתַן “give” is used in the *qal* perfect form, whilst the same verb is presented in Exod 6: 4, 8 in a *qal* infinitive construct form. The usage of different forms of the same verb suggests that in Gen 28: 4; 35: 12, YHWH already “gave” Abraham the Promised Land, whilst in Exod 6: 4, 8, YHWH was yet to fulfil the promise of land. The variant use of נָתַן “give” thus

⁴ Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 67.

⁵ Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 67.

reveals a contestation in the conceptualisation of the Promised Land. From the statement *אֶל־הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתִּי אֶת־יְדֵי לְתֶת אֹתָהּ לְאַבְרָהָם* “the land which I swore to give to Abraham” (Exod 6: 8), it is clear that Abraham did not possess but merely received a promise of the land. Therefore, one is less sympathetic to the view that the fulfilment of the promise of land occurred in the age of the Patriarchs.

As Ben Zvi has argued, none of the so-called triad conquered and possessed the Promised Land. Although there are allusions to the dispossession of land in the HB, “none of them can be related to a celebration of their actual dispossession by Abraham.”⁶ The mental map drawn by texts such as Gen 10:15-19; 15:18; Num 34: 1-12; Josh 13: 1-13; Ezek 47: 13-20 imply that the “land included much more than the territory of Yehud or even the two provinces of Yehud and Samaria together.”⁷ Based on the historical construction of the boundaries of Canaan and discussions of the biblical borders, the view that the promise of land was not fulfilled in the age of the Patriarch becomes appealing.⁸ The Promised Land is neither Yehud, nor Yehud and Samaria, but the whole of Canaan. Like Abraham, the members of the community in Yehud did not inherit the entire land, namely the whole of Canaan, which was promised to their ancestors, the Patriarchs. On the point that the Judeans inherited the land in the postexilic period, Ben Zvi remarks:

The impossibility under any worldly turn of events of the community’s desire to “inherit” the land in the “actual” world finds a direct parallel in the impossibility of Abraham (and Isaac and Jacob as

⁶ Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham,” 10.

⁷ Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham,” 11, especially n. 18.

⁸ Nadav Na’aman, *Canaan in the Second Millennium B.C.E. Collected Essays, Volume Two* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005a), 110-133; Nadav Na’aman, *Ancient Israel and Its Neighbors: Interaction and Counteraction* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005b), 265-278; Zecharia Kallai, “The Patriarchal Boundaries, Canaan and the Land of Israel: Patterns and Application in Biblical Historiography,” *Israel Exploration Journal* 47 (1997): 69-82.

well) to “inherit” it within the world portrayed in the patriarchal narratives and their associated memories.⁹

The preceding remark leaves little room to doubt the impossibility of the fulfilment of the promise of land in the postexilic period. Ben Zvi’s view concurs with Nihan who shows that at the time the Israelites were referred to as “resident aliens,” specifically in the postexilic period, they had no political control over the land.¹⁰ The fact that the people did not control or own the land led to tension among the Judeans in the postexilic period, which is mirrored in the priestly, non-priestly and post-priestly texts in the patriarchal narratives.

Furthermore, some divergence can be observed between the texts of Genesis and of Exodus on the conceptions of the land. The phrase *לְרִשְׁתָּהּ אֶת-אֶרֶץ* “so that you may inherit the land” in Gen 28: 4 is not mentioned in Exod 6: 2-8. In addition, the noun *יָרֵעַ* “descendants” in Gen 28: 4 and 35: 12 is absent in Exod 6: 2-8, a text which presupposes that Abraham did not possess the Promised Land, and which is not surprising because the articulation of a promise not fulfilled to an earlier generation would have been suspicious. The addressees of the patriarchal narratives could have asked the question: Why must we hold on to a promise that was made but not fulfilled to our forefathers? In the postexilic period, the non-fulfilment of the promise of land probably had to be explained and justified. On the issue of non-fulfilment of the promise, Gen 23: 4, a post-priestly text, suggests that the promise of land was partially fulfilled because Abraham possessed the land. However, it is clear that the possession of the burial land can

⁹ Ben Zvi, “The Memory of Abraham,” 13-14.

¹⁰ Christophe Nihan, “Resident Aliens and Natives in the Holiness Legislation,” in *The Foreign and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Achenbach, Reinhard, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 131; cf. Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 383; Jakob Wöhrle, “The Un-empty Land: The Concept of Exile and Land in P,” in *The Concept of Exile in Ancient Israel and Its Historical Context*, (ed. Ehud Ben Zvi and Christoph Levin; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2010), 189-206. Esias E. Meyer, “Returning to an Empty Land: Revisiting My Old Argument about Jubilee,” *Old Testament Essays* 27/2 (2014): 510.

hardly be seen as the fulfilment of the promise of land, that is, the whole of Canaan. The burial land was not Canaan. The non-fulfilment of the promise of land, which is clearly suggested by Exod 6: 2-8 and which Gen 23: 4 mentions, remained unsolved.

The term גֹּר "aliens" (Gen 28: 4; 32: 12 and Exod 6: 2-8) is not only employed in the context of בְּרִית "covenant" and אֶת־אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן "the land of Canaan" (cf. Exod 6: 4-5). It is also used in conjunction with the theme of the liberation of Judeans from Egyptian oppression. Unlike Exod 6: 4-5, Gen 28: 4 employs the term גֹּר "aliens" alongside the root verb יָרַשׁ "inherit." It is important to note that Exod 6: 4-5, which is a distinct P text, raises the topics of covenant, land and liberation in order to emphasise that the promise of land was still not fulfilled in the postexilic period, whilst a non-priestly text, Gen 35: 9, 11-13, 15 suggests that Abraham possessed the Promised Land. No doubt, the tension around the issue of the Promised Land in the postexilic period remained unresolved. Although Canaan in its entirety was never conquered, it must be said that some Judeans, including Abraham, did possess portions of land. The idea that Abraham and Judeans possessed portions of land prompts the question: Who owned the land in ancient Israel?

C. Land occupation in the Babylonian and Persian periods

The view that Jerusalem and the surrounding areas were depopulated during the Babylonian exile contrasts with the argument that the land was not empty.¹¹ The land was occupied by the indigenous Judeans who were not deported to Babylonia. A case in point on the issue of land occupation and ownership in ancient Israel is "the claim attributed to the indigenous Judeans, those

¹¹ Cf. Hans Barstad, "After the 'Myth of the Empty Land': Major Challenges in the Study of Neo-Babylonian Judah," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 3-20; Bob Becking, "'We All Returned as One!' Critical Notes on the Myth of the Mass Return," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 7.

not deported, to be the authentic descendants of Abraham, and therefore to hold title to the land, including the estates vacated by the deportees.”¹² The claim ensued from the report that the deportees had wandered far away from YHWH, hence the land was given to the indigenous Judeans, the so-called people of the land, as an inheritance according to Ezek 11: 14-16 and 33: 23-29. The claim that “the deportees have been expelled from the cult community and have therefore forfeited title to their land” suggests that the indigenous Judeans in the exilic and postexilic periods possessed the title to the land. Ezekiel 33: 24; 36: 1-5 and Exod 6: 8 further throw light on the claim attributed to the indigenous Judeans, because the texts show that the land was given to them as an inheritance (מורשה).¹³ The idea of inheritance is contained in the Abrahamic promise of land. Blenkinsopp asserts that “Abraham was promised the land for his posterity, but he himself only came into possession of a small plot of land, and he did so by purchasing it, not by inheriting it.”¹⁴ In particular, with respect to Gen 12: 2 and 13: 16, among other texts, he argues:

The indigenous Judeans were therefore claiming to be numerous descendants promised to Abraham, and because the land promise was inseparable from the promise of descendants, it followed that they held legitimate title to the land. The refutation came in the form of a reminder that the promise of land was conditional — a point often overlooked but made repeatedly in Deuteronomy. Their sins conduct — eating bloody meat, the cult of idols, murder, adultery — had invalidated their claim (33: 25-26).¹⁵

Based on the textual evidence noted above, it is indisputable that the land of Judah was occupied during the Babylonian exile. Archaeological data reveals that “a concentration of the population

¹² Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Judeans, Jews, Children of Abraham,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in an International Context* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011), 471.

¹³ Blenkinsopp, “Judeans, Jews, Children,” 472.

¹⁴ Blenkinsopp, “Judeans, Jews, Children,” 472; cf. Gen 23: 1-20.

¹⁵ Blenkinsopp, “Judeans, Jews, Children,” 473.

in the Bethel-Mizpah area is evident, indicating that 'those who remained in the land' were concentrated in the Northern part of the former kingdom of Judah."¹⁶ Becking also affirms that:

... the land of Judah was not empty during the so-called exilic period and that a considerable part of the population of Yehud in the Persian I period consisted of the descendants of those who remained in the land... The population of Yehud in Persian I is estimated by Carter at 13, 350 persons, which is about 30% of the 42, 000 persons cited in the list of returnees in Ezra 2 and Nehemiah 7. It is not easy to decide how many of these 13, 350 persons should be construed as returning exiles. The archaeological record, however, supplies a few clues. The number of 'New P sites', that is, sites that were inhabited for the first time in Persian I, in the various environmental niches of Yehud is 27% of the total inhabited sites during Persian I... Considering that not all returnees settled in new sites and that some of the descendants of those who remained in the land moved to these new sites, the number of returnees in Persian I may be estimated at a maximum of 4, 000 people.¹⁷

Given the archaeological as well as textual evidence, it becomes clear that the indigenous Judeans viewed the land they occupied during the exilic period as the inherited land which was promised to them in the covenant between YHWH and Abraham. During the Persian period, both the indigenous Judeans and the exile returnees occupied parts of the land. Since this study is an attempt to investigate the identity of those who possessed the Promised Land, if anyone did, it is critical therefore to consider the idea of possessing the land in the context of social class.

¹⁶ Becking, "We All Returned as One," 9.

¹⁷ Charles E. Carter, *The Emergence of Yehud in the Persian Period: A Social and Demographic Study* (Journal of the Study of the Old Testament Supplement 294, Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 201; Oded Lipschits, "Demographic Changes in Judah between the Seventh and the Fifth Centuries B.C.E.," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Joseph Blenkinsopp; Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 364-365; Becking, "We All Returned as One," 9-10.

During the Babylonian and Persian periods, the hill country west and east of Jordan served as agricultural areas.¹⁸ As Lipschits has noted, “the Achaemenids, like the Babylonian that preceded them, were interested in maintaining the existing rural settlement in the hill country, which were an important source of agricultural goods, which were probably collected as tax.”¹⁹ In this instance, the Judeans farmed their family estate in the villages, but the economy was controlled by the Achaemenids who in turn demanded the payment of taxes on the produce that accrued from farming. As regards the social class of these Judeans, tenants, indentured servants, prisoners of war, and debt slaves who farmed the family estates and villas did not only supply taxes, but also supplied portions of their produce to the Emperor.²⁰ In this case, Judean families possessed the title to the land. Although the use of land seems to have benefited the oppressed Judeans, the greater proportion of the produce was given to the palace owners and the upper class persons. It may thus be said that the control of the economy by the rulers in the Babylonian and Persian period was exploitative and served the interest of those in the palace.

The textual as well as archaeological evidence shows that there were also palace farms in the Babylonian and Persian contexts. The texts of 2 Sam 9: 6-10 and 1 Chr 27: 25-31 show that the grants of cultivable land were given out by royal authorities as estates to non-producers, implying that the royal authorities possessed portions of productive land. These estates also produced the surpluses used for the expansion of state activities such as building projects, military expansion and, for our purposes, lavish banquets. Archaeological finds, for instance, the archaeological site in the area of En Gedi, show that the Achaemenid royal

¹⁸ J. Lund, “The Northern Coastline of Syria in the Persian Period: A Survey of the Archaeological Evidence,” *Transeuphratene* 2 (1990): 28; Oded Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy, Settlement Processes in Palestine, and the Status of Jerusalem in the Middle of the Fifth Century B.C.E.,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Persian Period* (ed. Oded Lipschits and Manfred Oeming; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 29.

¹⁹ Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy,” 30.

²⁰ Roland Boer, *The Sacred Economy of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2015), 116–117.

authorities also possessed estate farms which were imperial production centres.²¹ The establishment of royal estates served the interest of the royal authorities. No doubt, the economy of ancient Israel was based on the extraction of agricultural goods and flocks from both the estates and the village communes which were redistributed to the court, army, and other royal authorities (1 Sam 8: 16-17; 2 Chr 31: 4-5).²²

Furthermore, the discourse on land occupation in the exilic and postexilic periods, as supported by archaeological and textual evidence, shows that the indigenous Judeans, exile returnees, and Babylonian as well as Achaemenid royal authorities possessed portions of land. Both the élites and the oppressed families owned portions of land, and the title to land was linked to the Abrahamic promise of land. Importantly, the economy of Judah and Judeans in the Babylonian and Achaemenid periods thrived on the exploitation of the poor. The textual evidence from Neh 5: 1-13 supports the idea of “social conflict between the rich families, nobles, and landowners and the poor families who had to sell their land and houses in order to pay their debts and heavy tax”.²³ Thus, the critical questions to pose are: Did the economy of Judah and the Judeans serve the interest of the élites because of the idea of “personal possession of land”? Could it also be that the idea of Yahweh’s *exclusive* ownership of the land was meant to address socio-economic injustices that were influenced by the idea of “personal possession of land”?

²¹ Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy,” 30; cf. Oded Lipschits, “Was There a Royal Estate in Ein-Gedi by the End of the Iron Age and during the Persian Period,” in *Jerusalem and Eretz Israel (Arie Kindler Volume)* (ed. Joshua Schwartz, Zohar Amar and Irit Ziffer; Tel Aviv: Eretz Israel Museum and Ingeborg Rennert Center for Jerusalem Studies, Bar-Ilan University, 2000), 37, 40-42.

²² Michael Heltzer, “Labour in Ugarit,” in *Labor in the Ancient Near East* (ed. Marvin A. Powell; New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1987), 237.

²³ Cf. Lipschits, “Achaemenid Imperial Policy,” 40.

D. Deuteronomistic and priestly conceptualisations of the Promised Land

The point that P's conceptualisation of land differs from that of D is conclusive. As Nihan has rightly argued:

... in P the land promised to Israel is not given as a נחלה, a *personal* possession, as in Deuteronomistic tradition, but rather as a אחזה, a term referring to a "*Nutzungsrecht*." In this conception, Israel has a right to the land's usufruct, but the land itself remains Yahweh's *exclusive* possession.²⁴

In D, נחלה "a personal possession" is often improperly rendered as "inheritance," whereas the concept refers to some form of "entitlement or rightful property of a party that is legitimised by a recognised social custom, legal process, or a divine character."²⁵ Thus, it is not surprising that the Deuteronomistic historian employed the term נחלה "a personal possession" in the story of Naboth's vineyard (1 Kgs 21: 3, 4), which shows that Naboth viewed the land as his personal possession. In other instances, namely Deut 15: 4; Josh 1: 6; 24: 32; Exod 15: 15, 17; Gen 48: 6, נחלה "a personal possession" is used with reference to the promise of land made to the Patriarchs, which suggests that there was an ideological contestation over the idea that the land was a personal possession. Given D's motif of the integration of the concerns of the people of Golah in the Persian period based on class, including the disparity between the urban and rural dwellers, the presentation of land as a personal possession is not surprising.²⁶ Scholars such as Knight and recently Boer point out that throughout the Monarchic, Neo-Assyrian, and Neo-Babylonian periods, and even during the Persian period, large portions of agricultural land which produced wealth were owned by the rich and powerful

²⁴ Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 66, cf. n. 241.

²⁵ Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 66-67, especially n. 241.

²⁶ See Thomas Römer, *The So-called Deuteronomistic History: A Sociological, Historical and Literary Introduction* (London: T&T Clark International, 2005), 175, 177.

élites who resided in the cities.²⁷ The apparent distinction between the ownership of land in the village and in the cities suggests that D preferred the rich élites to the poor, to a point of legitimizing the personal accumulation and ownership of land.²⁸ Clearly, D was sympathetic to the ideology of classism which commoditised and privatised land in favour of the rich. The usage of נחלה “a personal possession” in D texts as well as in texts which were influenced by D probably served the purpose of supporting and justifying the privatisation of land. Unlike D, P holds the ideological position that centralised the ownership of land in the hands of Yahweh; that is, Yahweh is presented as the sole owner of the land.

In P, Abraham regarded the portion of land he purchased for family burial as אחזה “Yahweh’s exclusive possession,” rather than a personal possession. In Gen 23: 4, Abraham said תָּנוּ לִי אֶחְזֶת־קֶבֶר עִמָּכֶם וְאֶקְבְּרָה מִתִּי מִלִּפְנֵי “... give me property among you for a burying place, so that I may bury my dead out of my sight.” In other P texts, the land was promised to Abraham as אחזה “Yahweh’s exclusive possession” (cf. Gen 17: 8; 28: 4; 36: 7; 37: 1; Exod 6: 4).²⁹ Interestingly, Gen 48: 3-4, a Priestly text, is found in the literary context of a non-priestly narrative, which is critical in the interpretation and foregrounding of אחזה as “Yahweh’s exclusive possession”.³⁰ In this P text, אֵל “God”, who revealed himself at Bethel, is linked to בְּאֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן “the land of Canaan” and אֶחְזֶת “Yahweh’s exclusive possession.” Since the land is viewed as אחזה “Yahweh’s exclusive possession,” the Israelites receive a usufruct, that is, a real right, which gives the holder the right to use and

²⁷ Douglas A. Knight, *Law, Power and Justice in Ancient Israel* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2011), 202.

²⁸ Cf. Mary Douglas, *Leviticus as Literature* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 243; Ross Kinsler and Gloria Kinsler, *The Biblical Jubilee and the Struggle for Life* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1999), 17.

²⁹ Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 68.

³⁰ Both Carr and Baden correctly assign the epiphany of Gen 48: 3-4 at Bethel to P; cf. David M. Carr, *Reading the Fractures of Genesis: Historical and Literary Approaches* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1996), 91; Joel S. Baden, “From Joseph to Moses: The Narratives of Exodus 1-2,” *Vetus Testamentum* 62 (2012): 156; Joel S. Baden, *The Promise to the Patriarchs* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 40.

enjoy the fruits of property owned by YHWH (cf. Gen 23: 4, 9, 20). The centralisation of land ownership provides a clue about the ideological position which opposed the view of land as a personal possession. Of significance is the point that P's ideological position that the land belonged to YHWH appears to serve the interests of the poor rather than of the rich Judean élites. It is clear therefore that the ideology of economic justice which is implied in the term *אֲחֻזָּה* "Yahweh's exclusive possession" stemmed from the ideological position of centralisation, which meant that the idea of personal ownership of land in Israel could not be legislated. In the economic situation "where Judean landowners were forced to sell their ancestral estate and, ultimately, become indentured slaves working on the estate of other, wealthy Judeans," P's contestation of the centralisation of land ownership made sense (cf. Neh 5: 8).³¹ It is remarkable that like H, P's conceptualisation of land exhibits concern for social justice.

E. The Promised Land in the Holiness Code — a case for social justice

The notion that the Patriarchs were sojourners and resident aliens in the Promised Land (cf. Gen 17: 8; 28: 4; 37: 1; Exod 6: 4) mainly because the land belonged to Yahweh appears to be affirmed by H in Lev 25: 23-24.³² In this case, one wonders whether H presented the land as solely belonging to Yahweh (cf. Lev 25: 23) with the view to refute the treatment of land as a personal asset by the élites in Yehud.

First, it is proper to give credence to Otto's contribution, which teases out parallels between Exod 19: 3b-6 and Lev 25: 23.³³

³¹ Christophe Nihan, "Resident Aliens and Natives in the Holiness Legislation," in *The Foreign and the Law: Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Achenbach, Reinhard, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 131.

³² Nihan, *Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 68.

³³ Eckart Otto, "The Holiness Code in Diachrony and Synchrony in the Legal Hermeneutics of the Pentateuch," in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contempo-*

In Exod 19: 3b-6, a text that also relates to Exod 6: 2-8, P's features are noticeable in: "to generations of the Israelites" (v. 3b); "being brought out of Egypt" (v. 4); "to keeping Yahweh's covenant" (v. 5); "to the Israelites as well as the land as being Yahweh's possession" (v. 5); and "to the Israelites as a holy nation" (v. 6). Similarly, vv. 23, 30, 38, 42, 46, 55 in Lev 25 exhibit H's characteristic features. In Lev 25: 23, the reason statement בְּיָדִי הָאָרֶץ "for the land is mine", which explains Yahweh's entitlement to the land, also exhibits an H feature. Regarding the sentence type, the reason statement in v. 23 exhibits an etiological feature, which is characteristic of a non-P stratum. Thus, one could reasonably deduce that v. 23 is a stratum of H even though there could be a different point of view. If v. 23 belongs to H, then, it is evident that H did not agree with the view that the land was a personal possession which enthused the rich to take ownership of land. Consequently, H restored the central ownership of land into the hands of Yahweh.

According to Milgrom, the land referred to in v. 23 is Canaan.³⁴ If that observation is correct, Römer's submission that D is featured by the reference to the Promised Land, which is typical of a Canaan material, becomes more interesting.³⁵ Thus, it is probable that the verse emanated from D's influence on H. Further, because allusion to the Promised Land is prominent in the final redaction of the Torah, the reference to the land that is typically D is not surprising.³⁶ Evidence of the prominence of the theme of land in D is found in Deut 1: 8; 6: 10; 7: 13; 8: 1; 9: 23; 19: 8; 28: 11; and 31: 7, 20-21 hence the assumption that v. 23 also exhibits a D feature. Given the hint of class distinction in D, the presence of D in v. 23

rary Debate and Future Directions (ed. Sarah Shectman and Joel S. Baden; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2009), 140.

³⁴ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus: A Book of Ritual and Ethics. A Continental Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), 298.

³⁵ Römer, *So-called Deuteronomistic History*, 116.

³⁶ Konrad Schmid, "The Late Persian Formation of the Torah: Observations on Deuteronomy 34," in *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.* (ed. Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers and Rainer Albertz; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2007), 239-240; Konrad Schmid, "Genesis in the Pentateuch," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception and Interpretation* (ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr and David L. Petersen; Vetus Testamentum Supplements 125. Leiden: Brill, 2012), 32.

probably shows that the centralisation of the land placed the right to own land in the hand of Yahweh instead of the people, specifically the rich elites.

Although v. 23 exhibits both the features of H and D, it is interesting that an element of P is also noticeable in the verse. Exod 6: 4, a distinct P text, shows P's conception of the land in which the key construct nouns מְגֵרִים "sojourners" and אֶרֶץ "the land" are used (cf. Gen 17: 8; 28: 4). On the relation of P's conceptualisation of the land in Exod 6: 4 to Lev 25: 8-55, Römer points out that "P's conception of the land comes close to the idea expressed in the Holiness Code: 'the land is mine; with me you are but aliens (*gerim*) and tenants'" (Lev 25: 23).³⁷ Beyond relating Exod 6: 4 to Lev 25: 23, as Römer has done, one would argue that Lev 25: 23 shows that H relied on P's conceptualisation of the land. In v. 23, the reason statement כִּי־לִי הָאֶרֶץ "for the land is mine," which exhibits H features, is followed by a reason statement, כִּי־גֵרִים "for you are sojourners." In that sequence, the concepts of land and strangers are combined in the same way as in Exod 6: 4. Like Römer, Schmid correctly classifies the absolute plural noun גֵּרִים "sojourners" as exhibiting a P feature.³⁸ He does so by referring to P texts which contain nouns similar to those in Exod 6: 4 and Lev 25: 23 (Gen 17: 8; 23: 4; 28: 4; 35: 27; 36: 7; 37: 1). If indeed P is earlier than H, it then means that the presence of a P feature in v. 23 is an instance in which H supplemented P. Moreover, if v. 23 exhibits a D feature and if one is cautious about the view that H also used D, then, v. 23 provides evidence that H supplemented both P and D at the same time. On this point, H expresses an ideological position which cedes the re-centralisation of the ownership of land into YHWH's hands. Contrary to the view and treatment of the land as a personal possession is H's theological and ideological

³⁷ Thomas Römer, "The Exodus Narrative According to the Priestly Document," in *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions* (ed. Sarah Shectman and Joel S. Baden; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2009), 164.

³⁸ Konrad Schmid, "The So-called Yahwist and the Literary Gap between Genesis and Exodus," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid. Atlanta, GA: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 43.

position that YHWH owns the productive land. In this case, H's ideological position is liberating as it rejects the tendency that perpetuates self-enrichment on the part of the rich élites.

F. Conclusion

First, this article has argued that it was unlikely that the promise of land, namely the whole of Canaan, was fulfilled at the time of Abraham and of the Judeans in the postexilic period. Second, the article not only offers a glimpse into the possible identity of those who possessed portions of land in the exilic and postexilic periods, but it also points out that the economy of Judah and of Judeans was exploitative. Third, the variation in the concept of the land as נחלה “a personal possession” and אחזה “Yahweh's exclusive possession” reveals ideological contestations, that is, over privatisation and centralisation of land. Fourth, based on the concern for social justice, and more importantly, against the view that land was a personal possession, it is claimed that H supplemented both D and P's concept of the Promised Land in order to redress disproportional benefits from the ownership and use of productive land.

A Source of P? The Priestly Exodus Account and the Book of Ezekiel

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Résumé. Cet article cherche à montrer que le récit sacerdotal de l'Exode, notamment entre le mandat de Moïse (Ex 6) et la traversée de la mer des Roseaux (Ex 14), a été composé sous l'influence d'Ézékiel 20; 29-32. Le récit sacerdotal des plaies a une visée plus large qu'il est communément admis, avec neuf prodiges opérés par Moïse et Aaron. Outre le lien littéraire bien connu entre Ex 6 et Éz 20, les prodiges sacerdotaux tels le crocodile, le sang, les ténèbres, et la mer des Roseaux adaptent l'imagerie de la prophétie d'Ézékiel contre le Pharaon (Éz 29-32). En outre, la double nature de תנינ in Ézékiel comme crocodile (Éz 29) et monstre marin mythique (Éz 31) se reflète en P, complétant un cycle mythique de création – combat.

I. Introduction

Since August Klostermann identified Ezekiel as the author of the Holiness Code in his 1877 article,¹ the close relationship between Ezekiel and the Priestly legal material in the Pentateuch has received much scholarly attention. An ample number of studies have been carried out on this issue so far, yet relatively little attention has been paid to the Priestly Exodus narrative and its literary relationship with Ezekiel. Nevertheless, especially for the interest of this paper, a few significant studies have been carried out recently by scholars, for instance, T. Pola, Risa Kohn, Johan Lust.² Those studies effectively exhibit the close literary and lin-

¹ See A. Klostermann, "Beiträge zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs," *ZLThK* 38 (1877): 401-445.

² T. Pola, *Die ursprüngliche Priesterschrift: Beobachtungen zur Literarkritik und Traditionsgeschichte von Pg* (Wissenschaftliche Monographien zum Alten und Neuen Testament 70. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1995), 145-212;

guistic relationship between the Ezekiel 20 and the Priestly version of the commissioning of Moses (Exodus 6). A broader comparison, however, reveals that not only Exodus 6 but also the entire Priestly account of Exodus, from Exodus 1 to 14, has been composed under literary influence from Ezekiel, particularly Ezek 20 and the prophecies against Egypt in Ezek 29-32. In this paper, I will endeavor to show how the expressions, motifs, and imagery found in those Ezekiel texts were adapted by the Priestly author in his composition of the Exodus account, and discuss the implications of this in understanding the nature of the Priestly text. For the sake of precision, I will first redefine the Priestly wonders (מפתים) in Exodus 7-14, which are most relevant to our discussion. After that I will turn to a comparison between the Priestly Exodus account and Ezekiel.

II. The Priestly Exodus Account

There has been near consensus in the reconstruction of the Priestly text especially in the first half of the Book of Exodus. The majority of critics maintain that the Priestly wonders consist of the episodes of the crocodile or the dragon (7.8-13), Blood (7.19-20a, 21b-22), Frogs (8.1-3), Lice (8.12-15), and Boils (9.8-12), which contain the theme of the competition between Aaron and Pharaoh's magicians. Nevertheless, it is misleading to assume that P's main theme is the competition between Aaron and the magicians and to confine P only to those competition episodes. In the episode of Boils (9.8-12), the alleged conclusion of the P wonders according to the majority of the scholars, it is Moses who performs the miracle, whereas Aaron is only briefly mentioned. The hero, who has been Aaron so far, is replaced by Moses in this episode, and the complete defeat of the magicians is credited to

R. L. Kohn, *A New Heart and a New Soul: Ezekiel, the Exile and the Torah* (JSOTSupp. 358. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 2002), 30-85; J. Lust, "Ez XX, 4-26: Une parodie de l'histoire religieuse d'Israël" *ETL* 43 (1967): 488-527; idem, "Exodus 6,2-8 and Ezekiel," in M. Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus: Redaction, Reception, Interpretation* (BETHL 126. Leuven: Leuven University Press: Peeters, 1996), 209-224. For the earlier studies, see Pola, *Priesterschrift*, 148ff.

Moses (9.11).³ Such a transition of the hero seems better understood as an anticipation of continuing miracles by Moses. In my view, the Priestly episodes continue with Moses as the hero through the episodes of Hail (9.22-23a^{*}, 25, 35), Locusts (10.12-13a^{*}, 14a, 15^{*}, 20), and Darkness (10.21-23, 27), and end with the parting of the Sea of Reeds (14.1-4, 8-9, 10^{*}, 15-18, 21-23^{*}, 26-27a^{*}, 28-29). It has been perceived that these passages interrupt the narrative flow of the episodes to which they belong. Classical source critics, therefore, assigned the verses to E⁴ or R^{JE},⁵ while a more recent trend is to attribute them to a post-Priestly redactor.⁶

³ See also T. Römer, "Competing Magicians in Exodus 7-9: Interpreting Magic in the Priestly Theology," in T. E. Klutz (ed.), *Magic in the Biblical World: From the Rod of Aaron to the Ring of Solomon* (JSNTSup 245. London: T & T Clark, 2003), 12-22, esp. 20f.; J. Van Seters, "A Contest of Magicians? The Plague Stories in P," in D. P. Wright et al. (eds.), *Pomegranates and Golden Bells: Studies in Biblical, Jewish, and Near Eastern Ritual, Law, and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1995), 569-579.

⁴ See e.g. J. Wellhausen, *Die Composition des Hexateuchs und der Historischen Bücher des Alten Testaments* (Berlin: Reimer, 1899), 61-72; A. Kuenen, *An Historico-Critical Inquiry into the Origin and Composition of the Hexateuch* (Trans. P. H. Wiksteed. London: Macmillan, 1886), 149ff.; H. Holzinger, *Exodus* (Kurzer Hand-Commentar zum Alten Testament 2. Tübingen et al.: Mohr Siebeck, 1900), 21-33; S. R. Driver, *The Book of Exodus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1911), 55-86; R. Smend, *Die Erzählung des Hexateuch auf ihre Quellen untersucht* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1921), 126-137; B. S. Childs, *The Book of Exodus: A Critical, Theological Commentary* (OTL. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 131f.

⁵ See for example W. Fuss, *Die deuteronomistische Pentateuchredaktion in Exodus 3-17* (BZAW 126. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1972), 211ff.

⁶ See F. Kohata, *Jahwist und Priesterschrift in Exodus 3-14*. (BZAW 166. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1986), 93ff.; H. C. Schmitt, "Tradition der Prophetenbücher in den Schichten der Plagenerzählung Ex 7,1-11,10," in V. Fritz et al. (eds.), *Prophet und Prophetenbuch: FS für Otto Kaiser zum 65. Geburtstag* (BZAW 185. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 196-216; L. Schmidt, *Beobachtungen zu der Plagenerzählung in Exodus VII 14-XI 10* (Leiden: Brill, 1990), 80ff.; idem, *Studien zur Priesterschrift* (BZAW 214. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1993), 10ff.; R. E. Friedman, *The Exile and Biblical Narrative: The Formation of the Deuteronomistic and the Priestly Codes* (HSM 22. Chico, CA: Scholars Press, 1981), 92-95, 143; J. C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung* (FRLANT 189. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 74-188; B. Lemmelijn, "The So-called 'Priestly' Layer in Exod 7,14, 11,10: 'Source' and/or 'Redaction'?" *RB* 109 (2002): 481-511, esp. 504. See also J.-L. Ska, "Les plaies d'Égypte dans le récit sacerdotal," *Bib* 60 (1979): 23-35. Here Ska agrees with the classical view that assigns only five wonders

However, all these passages exhibit a formulation very similar to that of the Priestly miracles performed by Aaron. Firstly, the episodes begin with YHWH's command to Moses to stretch out his hands or staff in the same fashion as the command is given to Aaron; then brief reports of the sequence of events follow in an almost identical fashion to that of Aaron's wonders (see Table 1); and finally the episodes end with the Priestly hardening formula (זִק in Hiph. + לֵב פִּרְעָה). Therefore, already M. Noth attributed those texts to P^G and, recently, E. Blum included the texts in KP, the Priestly composition.⁷

Table 1. Formal Similarity of the Priestly Miracles

Miracles by Aaron	Miracles by Moses
Crocodile (7.9f.*)	Hail (Ex 9.22-23*)
ואמרת אל אהרון קח את מטך והשלך לפני פרעה וישלך אהרון את מטהו לפני פרעה	ויאמר ה' אל משה נטה את ידך על השמים ויט משה את מטהו על השמים
Blood (7.19*)	Locusts (Ex 10.12-13*)
ויאמר ה' אל משה (אמר אל אהרון) קח את מטך ונטה את ידך על מימי מצרים	ויאמר ה' אל משה נטה את ידך על ארץ מצרים ויט משה את מטהו על ארץ מצרים...
Frogs (8.1f.*)	Darkness (Ex 10.21-22*)
ויאמר ה' אל משה (אמר אל אהרון) נטה את ידך (במטך) על הנהרת ויט אהרון את ידו על מימי מצרים	ויאמר ה' אל משה נטה את ידך על השמים ויט משה את מטהו על השמים...
Lice (8.12f.*)	The Sea of Reeds (Ex 14.15f., 21, 26f.*)
ויאמר ה' אל משה (אמר אל אהרון) נטה את	...ויאמר ה' אל משה נטה את ידך

(Sea Dragon to Boils) to P(G). Also Propp assigns the verses to E, but together with the rest of the non-Priestly passages. Propp finds mainly two sources (E and P) in the plagues story. See Propp, *Exodus 1-18: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 2. New York: Doubleday, 1999), 286ff, 310ff.

⁷ See M. Noth, *Exodus: A Commentary* (Trans. by J.S. Bowden. Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1974), 62-84. Blum follows Noth and includes the present passages to the Priestly composition layer. See E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189. Berlin; New York: de Gruyter, 1990), 242ff. See also J. Jeon, *The Call of Moses and the Exodus Story: A Redactional-Critical Study in Exodus 3-4 and 5-13* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 178ff.

מטך ויט משה את ידו על הים
ויט אהרן את מטהו...

Once the Priestly wonders are sorted out as above, a discernible structure emerges: nine episodes arranged nearly symmetrically (see Table 2). In the first four episodes (the Crocodile, Blood, Frogs, and Lice), Aaron competes with the magicians, ultimately defeating them (Lice: 8.14-15). In the fifth episode (Boils), at the center of the structure, the hero changes from Aaron to Moses; the last four episodes (Hail, Locusts, Darkness, and the Sea of Reeds) are performed by Moses alone, and the entire cycle concludes with the Egyptian army's defeat at the Sea of Reeds. Each side has miracles on the water (Blood-Frog and Sea of Reeds), the land (Lice and Locust), and heaven (Boil and Darkness).⁸

Table 2. *Arrangement of the Priestly Wonders (Ex 7-14)*⁹

Wonders	Realm	Performer
(1) Crocodile (7.8-13)	Land (7.10)	Aaron
(2) Blood (7.19-20a, 21b-22)	Water (7.19)	
(3) Frogs (8.1-3b)	Water-Land (8.2)	
(4) Lice (8.12-15)	Land (8.12)	
(5) Boils (9.8-12)	Heaven (9.8)	Transition (Aaron to Moses)
(6) Hail (9.22-23aα*, 25, 35)	Heaven (9.22)	Moses
(7) Locusts (10.12-13aα*, 14a, 15*, 20)	Land (10.12)	
(8) Darkness (10.21-23, 27)	[Heaven (9.21)]	
(9) Parting the Sea of Reeds (14.1-4, 8-9, 10*, 15-18, 21-23*, 26-27aα*, 28-29)	Water (14.21)	

In his influential form-critical study, G. Coats claimed that the Sea narrative belongs to the Wilderness tradition rather than the

⁸ For a detailed discussion, see J. Jeon, *The Call of Moses*, 178ff.

⁹ See *ibid.*

Exodus tradition,¹⁰ which provoked criticism.¹¹ Indeed, in the non-P portions of the narrative wilderness, motifs are found, such as the pillar of cloud and fire; yet the Priestly portions share much in common with the previous P narrative, such as the description of the performance of the miracle, the motifs of the hardening of Pharaoh's heart, and the recognition of YHWH, as will be discussed below. If this is the case, the Priestly Exodus account is framed by the P version of the commissioning of Moses Ex 6 (introduced by 2.23b-24) as the beginning and the Priestly sea narrative Ex 14 as the conclusion.¹²

III. The Connections with Ezekiel

The Priestly Exodus account from Exodus 6 to 14 exhibits linguistic and thematic similarities with the Book of Ezekiel. Critics have perceived the similarities between the language of Exodus 6.2-8 and Ezekiel, especially Ezekiel 20. Both texts correspond considerably to each other, first of all, in their use of similar terms. For instance, the revelation of YHWH to the people in Egypt is associated with the expression ידע in *Nifal* form (Ex 6.2f.; Ezek 20.5); similar terms are used for the covenant בריתי את (Ex 6.4) and ואזכר את בריתי (Ex 6.5), as in Ezek 16.59-63¹³; the land of resi-

¹⁰ See G. W. Coats, "A Structural Transition in Exodus." VT 22 (1972): 129-242.

¹¹ Note that the place of event in the Priestly Sea Narrative is still Egypt (14.2). Even before Coats' thesis, McCarthy demonstrated a number of linguistic and thematic indications that the drowning at the sea was the climax of the Plagues narrative. See McCarthy, "Plagues and the Sea of Reeds: Exodus 5-14." JBL 85 (1966): 137-158; idem, "Plagues and Sea of Reeds," 150ff. See also B. S. Childs, "A Tradition-Historical Study of the Reed Sea Tradition," VT 20 (1970): 406-418. For a criticism of Coats, see Childs, *Exodus*, 221f.

¹² See Jeon, *Call of Moses*, 181; McCarthy, "Plagues and the Sea of Reeds," 136-147; Ska, "Les plaies d'Égypte dans le récit sacerdotal," Bib 60 (1979): 23-35, esp. 30ff.; T. B. Dozeman, *Exodus* (The Eerdmans Critical Commentary. Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 2009), 199ff.

¹³ The Ezekiel passage is generally regarded as editorial. See e.g. Lust, "Exodus 6,2-8 and Ezekiel," 215; T. Krüger, *Geschichtskonzepte im Ezechielbuch* (BZAW 180. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1989), 329-331; T. Wagner, "'Ungeklärte Verhältnisse'. Die priesterliche Urgeschichte und das Buch Ezechiel." KuD 59 (2013), 207-229.

dence is described as **ארץ מגריהם** (Ex 6.4; Ezek 20.38)¹⁴; both use the phrase **לכן אמר** (Ex 6.6; Ezek 11.17f.; 12.23, 28; 14.16; 20/30; 33.25; 36.22); YHWH's acts of deliverance are described as ...**והוצאתי אתכם מ...** (Ex 6.6; Ezek 11.9; 20.34), **נצל** in *Hiphil* form (Ex 6.6; most similarly Ezek 34.27), and the root **גאל** (Ex 6.6; Ezek 11.15); the covenant formula appears as **והייתי לכם לאלהים** (Ex 6.7; similarly Ezek 11.20; 14.11; 34.24; 36.28; 37.23, 27); the phrase **והבאתי אתכם אל הארץ אשר** appears especially in relative sentences starting with **אשר** (Ex 6.8; 20.28, 42); **מורשה** is used with the verb **נתן** (Ex 6.8; Ezek 11.15; 25.4, 10; 33.24; 36.2f., 5); the recognition formula **וידעתם כי אני ה' אלהיכם** is found (Ex 6.7; similarly 72 times in Ezekiel), especially combined with the covenant formula (Ex 6.6; Ezek 37.27f.).¹⁵

Special attention should be given to the so-called recognition formula: 'and they will know that I am YHWH your God' (**וידעתם כי אני ה' אלהיכם**). This formulaic expression occurs at the beginning of the P Exodus narrative (Ex 6.7) and twice at the end of the Exodus account (Ex 14.4; 18). The formula envelops the whole narrative,¹⁶ producing a thematic thread and providing the purpose of the P exodus narrative, which is to cause let them to know YHWH. The recognition formula is, as it has often been well perceived, a typical Ezekielian expression.¹⁷ It appears a total of 72 times throughout the Book of Ezekiel in various occasions with two main purposes: being recognition of YHWH by Israel on the one hand, and the nations on the other.¹⁸ Such a dual usage of the

¹⁴ In Ex 6.4 the term indicates the land of Canaan, whereas in Ezek 20.38 it means the lands the people were scattered over. The term is typically Priestly in the Pentateuch, while it occurs only once in Ezekiel.

¹⁵ See, also, Lust, "Exodus 6,2-8 and Ezekiel"; Kohn, *A New Heart*, 98ff.; B. Gosse, "Le livre d'Ezéchiel et Ex 6,2-8 dans le cadre du Pentateuque." *BN* 104 (2000): 20-25; B. Gosse, "Exode 6,8 comme réponse à Ezéchiel 33, 24." *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 74 (1994): 241-247.

¹⁶ The formula therefore forms an *inclusio* structure at the beginning (7.5) and the end (14.4, 18) of the Priestly Exodus narrative. See Jeon, *Call of Moses*, 181.

¹⁷ See also, W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel* (BK 13. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1979), 56; Lust, "Exodus 6,2-8 and Ezekiel," 218.

¹⁸ The formula is used for Israel in Ezek 7.27; 11.10, 12; 12.15, 16, 20; 13.14, 21, 23; 14.8; 15.8; 17.24; 20. 12, 20, 26, 38, 42, 44; 22.16, 22; 23.49; 24.24; 24.27; 33.29;

formula in Ezekiel corresponds precisely to the Priestly Exodus account in which the formula is used for Israel at the beginning (Ex 6.7) and for Egypt at the end (Ex 14.4; 18). The recognition of YHWH by Egypt is an especially dominant theme in the prophecy against Egypt (Ezek 29.6, 9, 29; 30.8, 25, 26; 32.15), supporting its connection to the Priestly account of the Sea of Reeds. This point will be discussed below.

The connection between the Priestly Exodus account and Ezekiel's prophecy against Egypt is further supported by the motif of judgment. P defines the Exodus not only as a salvation of the Israelites but also as a great judgment (שפטים גדלים, Ex 6.6; 7.4) of Egypt. The latter is a unique motif in P, one which never appears in non-P Exodus accounts. Interestingly, however, the judgment motif is found in Ezekiel's prophecy. Ezek 30.19 clarifies that all the disasters of Egypt mentioned in Ezek 30.1-18 are YHWH's judgment of Egypt (ועשיתי שפטים במצרים). Also, as the announcement of the judgment in Ex 7.4b is immediately followed by the recognition formula (וידעו מצרים כי אני ה'), so is the judgment motif in Ezek 30.19 also combined with the formula (ידעו כי אני ה'). The judgment of Egypt in P is described with the expression 'with my arm stretched over Egypt' (בגטתי את ידי על מצרים: Ex 7.5b), which is a dominant expression in Ezekiel used for the judgment of nations (Ezek 6.14; 14.13; 16.27; 25.13, 16; 35.3).¹⁹

The Priestly Wonders

The correspondence between the Priestly Exodus narrative and Ezekiel is found also in some episodes of the Priestly wonders. The episodes use imagery especially found in Ezekiel's prophecy against Egypt (Ezek 29–32).

34.27, 30; 34.30; 36.11, 23 (36), 38; 37.6, 13, 14, 28; 38.23; 39. 22, 28, and for the nations in Ezek 25.5, 7, 11; 26.6; 28.22, 23, 26; 35.4, 9, 12, 15; 39.6, 7. The formula is used also for Egypt in Ezek 29.6, 9 (29); 30.8, 25, 26; 32.15. Also in Isa 49.23, 26; 60.16 are found expressions similar to the Ezekielian recognition formula, but they are not typically the language of Isaiah.

¹⁹ Cf. Isa 5.25; Jer 6.12; 15.6; 51.25; Zeph 1.4; 2.13.

1. Crocodile (תנין)

Ezekiel's first prophecy against Pharaoh and Egypt begins with an identification of Pharaoh as a great crocodile (תנין) in the midst of the Nile (29.2–6a).²⁰ In spite of Pharaoh's arrogant declaration that he made the Nile for himself (v. 3b), according to the prophecy, YHWH will draw him out of the channels of the Nile and fling him with the fishes attached to him into the open field. Pharaoh, the crocodile, will be eaten by the beasts and birds (vv. 4–5). This metaphoric imagery of the crocodile and its death initiates the series of prophecies of judgment of Pharaoh and Egypt. This imagery reminds us, interestingly, of the first Priestly wonder, that is, to turn Aaron's rod into a crocodile before the eyes of Pharaoh and his servants (Ex 7.9f.).²¹ As Ezekiel's first prophecy against

²⁰ By the most critics תנין here is understood as תנין in elsewhere in the Scripture, yet, there have been debates about its nature in this specific text, whether it is a mythical creature such as a sea dragon or merely a crocodile. Nevertheless, in this text the realistic description of its hunting using a hook (v. 4), combined with the specific geographical note of Nile and its branches, supports that תנין here means a crocodile rather than a mythic sea monster. See also Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 706f.; G. A. Cooke, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Ezekiel* (ICC. Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1936), 326; M. Greenberg, *Ezekiel 21–37: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 22A. New York: Doubleday, 1997), 601f.; L. C. Allen, *Ezekiel 20–48*, (WBC 29. Dallas: Thomas Nelson, 1990), 105.

²¹ The connection between the two passages has long been recognized. See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 601; N. M. Sarna, *Exodus: The Traditional Hebrew Text with the New JPS Translation: Commentary* (Philadelphia; New York: The Jewish Publication Society, 1991), 37; W. Eichrodt, *Ezekiel* (trans. by C. Quin. OTL. London: SCM Press, 1980), 403, 432–433. Some critics render the תנין in Ex 7.9f. as a monstrous creature such as a sea dragon; see e.g. Dozemann, *Exodus*, 194ff., 212; J. I. Durham, *Exodus* (WBC 3. Waco: Word books, 1987), 89f.; T. E. Fretheim, *Exodus. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1991), 113; Propp, *Exodus 1–16*, 322. Also LXX renders it as δράκων. See, for the LXX rendering, D. M. Gurtner, *Exodus: A Commentary on the Greek Text of Codex Vaticanus* (Septuagint Commentary Series. Leiden: Brill, 2013), 265. Yet תנין in this verse is better understood as a crocodile in relationship with Ezekiel 29 as well as Egypt's affinity to crocodiles in general. It is inappropriate to render it as a mythical creature, considering that the transformation of the rod happens in the confined place of the court of Pharaoh and that the Egyptian magicians were also able to produce the same creatures. Many critics therefore understand the

Pharaoh was the metaphor of a crocodile, Aaron, who is deemed a prophet (נביא, Ex 7.1), starts his mission against Pharaoh with a transformation wonder producing a crocodile. Likewise, Ezekiel's imagery of the crocodile being eaten by animals (Ezek 29.5b) is projected in P in that Pharaoh's magicians' crocodiles are comparably eaten by Aaron's crocodile.

2. Blood and Darkness

The imagery of Pharaoh as תנין reappears in Ezekiel's prophecy in Ezek 32.1-8. As most commentators agree, the תנין in this prophecy is a mythical monster (e.g. Isa 51.9f.; Ps 74.13) and therefore this creature is slaughtered on a cosmic scale,²² which is again echoed in P. According to Ezek 32.6, for example, YHWH will drench the mountains and fill the watercourses with the blood of Pharaoh, the תנין. Comparably, the second Priestly wonder, which follows the crocodile episode, is the blood that drenches the entire land of Egypt and fills the watercourses (Ex 7.19, 21b). The grand scale of the Priestly wonder is clearly distinguished from the non-Priestly blood plague which is limited to the Nile (Ex 7.17, 20b). The close connection between the blood and תנין in Ezekiel is indirectly implied in the Priestly wonder in that it is Aaron's rod, which once turned to תנין, that brings blood to Egypt (Ex 7.19).

creature as a crocodile (see U. Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Exodus* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961 [Hebrew]), 94; Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 601; Sarna, *Exodus*, 37; Eichrodt, *ibid.*) or simply a sea serpent (see Childs, *Exodus*, 121f.; C. Houtman, *Exodus 1* (HCOT. Kampen: Leuven: Kok Publ. House; Peeters, 1993), 532; W. H. Schmidt, *Exodus* (BK. Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1988), 337). My previous translation of the word as a sea serpent (*Call of Moses*, 178ff.) should be corrected as a crocodile.

²² See Zimmerli, *Ezekiel*, 767f.; Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 651. Allen, *Ezekiel 20-48*, 105, 131; D. I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel 25-48* (The New International Commentary on the Old Testament. Grand Rapids Mich. [etc.]: W.B. Eerdmans, 1997), 137, 199ff.; J. Blenkinsopp, *Ezekiel. Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 1990), 128f., 140. Gunkel already pointed out the mythic nature of the passage, see H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen, 1895), 71ff. Cf. Cooke, *Ezekiel*, 347.

Following the blood, YHWH's punishment of the תנים in Ezekiel's prophecy extends its scope to heaven. According to Ezek 32.7f., YHWH will cover heaven and darken the stars, Moon, and Sun to plunge Egypt into darkness (חשך). Similarly in P, YHWH brings darkness to the entire land of Egypt for three days (Ex 10.21-23). The Priestly darkness wonder is the seventh one, detached from the wonders of תנין and the blood. Also in Ezekiel, the darkness (32.7f.) is not necessarily a logical consequence of the killing of the תנים, but rather loosely attached to the latter.

3. Cosmic Scale: Heaven, Earth, and Sea

The prophecy in Ezek 32.1ff. describes the punishment of Pharaoh (תנים) in three different natural domains: water, earth, and heaven. L. Allen therefore points out that 'the elements of water, earth and heaven introduce a cosmic dimension appropriate to the subject' of the punishment of Egypt.²³ Similarly in P, the wonders are arranged by the frame of the three natural domains. As was indicated in Table 2 above, Aaron and Moses each perform the wonders in three domains, explicitly directing water (מים), land (ארץ), and heaven (שמים).

4. The 'Hardening Formula'

It is a long-standing consensus among the critics that there exist two different sets of wording for describing the hardening of Pharaoh's heart in the Plagues story: non-P text uses כבד (usually Hiph.) + לב (Ex 7.14; 8.11, 28; 9.7, 34; 10.1), whereas the Priestly text (including R^p) prefers חזק (mostly Qal) + לב (Ex 7.13. 22; 8.15; 9.12; 9.35; 10.20, 27; 11.10; 14.4, 8, 17) and rarely לב + קשה (Ex 7.3).²⁴ The two Priestly expressions appear very rarely elsewhere in the Bible, yet both are found in Ezekiel: לב + חזק in Ezek 3.7 (cf. Prov 28.14) and לב + קשה in Ezek 2.4 (cf. Josh 11.20).

²³ See Allen, *Ezekiel* 20-48, 131f.

²⁴ See e.g. Van Setters, *Moses*, 87ff.; Jeon, *Call of Moses*, 179ff.; 231ff.

5. Parting the Sea

As mentioned above, commentators agree that the תנינ in Ezek 32.1ff. is a mythical sea monster that requires slaughter on a cosmic scale, whereas the creature in Ezek 29 is a crocodile of the Nile that can be hunted by a hook (Ezek 29.4).²⁵ We may therefore observe alteration of the concept of תנינ in Ezekiel's prophecies against Egypt, from a crocodile to a mythic sea monster. Such a conceptual shift in Ezekiel may assist us in understanding the last Priestly wonder, parting the Sea (Ex 14), in terms of a modified Combat Myth.

A primordial divine battle with a cosmic sea monster, which is often associated with dividing the sea and creating the world, is a wide-spread element in Ancient Near Eastern myths of Babylonia, Canaan, Egypt, and Greece. The influence of the so-called Combat Myth in the various biblical traditions has been broadly recognized already by Gunkel, and recently W. H. C. Propp persuasively pointed out its influence on the Priestly Sea narrative.²⁶ According to Propp, YHWH's splitting (ויבקעו, Ex 14.21b) of the Sea of Reeds is a demythologized manifestation of the Combat Myth in which a deity defeats the primordial sea monster. If we put this claim together with the alteration of the nature of תנינ in Ezekiel, we may say that in the first Priestly wonder Pharaoh is identified as a crocodile as in Ezek 29.1ff.; in the last Priestly wonder, which is the high point of the narrative, Pharaoh the sea monster, with an echo of Ezek 32, is defeated by YHWH through his parting of the Sea.²⁷

This picture brings us back to the Priestly creation account. It has frequently been perceived that YHWH's parting of the sea and revealing the dry land (יבשה) in Ex 14.16, 22 is connected to the similar P account in Genesis 1, where God divides the primor-

²⁵ See Greenberg, *Ezekiel*, 651.

²⁶ See H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 71ff.; Propp, *Exodus 1-16*, 560f. See also Dozemann, *Exodus*, 298ff.

²⁷ Similarly, F. Bernard claims that 'P portrays Egypt as an extension of the chaos dragon'. See F. Bernard, *Slaying the Dragon: Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville, Ky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1992), 113.

dial water and reveals the dry land (יִבְשָׁה; Gen 1.6f., 10).²⁸ Also, the sea monster תַּנִּין is mentioned in Gen 1.21, demythologized as one of the aquatic beings created by God. With regard to the connection between Genesis 1 and Exodus 14, therefore, Propp argues that the Combat Myth is displaced to Exodus 14 from the Creation of Genesis 1, ‘thrust forward from mythic time into (supposedly) historical time’.²⁹

The Priestly accounts of Creation and building of the Tabernacle are often compared to the Babylonian creation myth *Enûma Eliš*, according to which Marduk creates the world by defeating the primordial sea or sea monster Tiamat, and completes creation by building his temple.³⁰ If we read the Priestly Sea narrative as a demythologized manifestation of the mythic element of defeating the sea monster (תַּנִּין), we would have in P a complete set of the major mythic elements from *Enûma Eliš*, that is, the creation, the defeat of a Sea Monster, and the building of the temple.³¹

²⁸ See e.g. C. Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), 74; T. Römer, “From the Call of Moses to the Parting the Sea,” in T. B. Dozeman et al. (eds.), *The Book of Exodus: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (VTSup 164. Leiden: Brill, 2014), 121–150, esp. 146.

²⁹ See Propp, *Exodus 1–16*, 560f. The parentheses are original.

³⁰ See M. Weinfeld, “Shabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord – the Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Gen 1:1–2:3,” in A. Caquot and M. Delcor (eds.), *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles* (Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 501–512. See also, recently, Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*, 74; T. Römer, “The Exodus Narrative According to the Priestly Document,” in S. Shectman, and J. S. Baden (eds.) *The Strata of the Priestly Writings: Contemporary Debate and Future Directions* (Zürich: TVZ, Theologischer Verlag, 2009), 157–174, esp. 160f.; K. L. Sparks, “‘Enûma Elish’ and Priestly Mimesis: Elite Emulation in Nascent Judaism.” *JBL* 126 (2007): 625–648; J. Calaway, *The Sabbath and the Sanctuary: Access to God in the Letter to the Hebrews and Its Priestly Context* (Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 37f. For comparisons between the Priestly tabernacle account and other ANE temple building accounts, see A. S. Kapelrud, “Temple Building, A Task for Gods and Kings,” *Orientalia NS* 32 (1963): 56–62; M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford, 1972), 244–254; V. A. Hurowitz, “The Priestly Account of Building the Tabernacle,” *JAOS* 105 (1985): 21–30.

³¹ See also Römer, “The Exodus Narrative According to the Priestly Document,” 160.

IV. Conclusions

From the above discussion, several notable aspects of the literary influence of one passage on another can be illustrated. Firstly, whereas the language of Ezekiel 20 is closely reflected in Exodus 6, the influence of Ezek 29-32 on the Priestly wonders is rather indirect: the imagery of the former is alluded in the latter, with less explicit logical connections between them. Such a difference in the type or degree of literary influence might have been caused by different authorship of the two Ezekiel texts and their different relationships to the Priestly writer. Also, it is not impossible that the differences represent different stages of the composition of the Priestly text.

Secondly, the imagery of the crocodile or sea monster, blood, and darkness in Ezekiel 32 is used metaphorically to vividly express the judgment of Pharaoh and Egypt. In the Priestly wonders, however, the metaphoric imagery of Ezekiel's prophecies is materialized (real crocodiles appear; real blood drenches the land and fills watercourses; real darkness covers Egypt). If it is P's general tendency to historicize the mythic elements from ANE myths, as Propp and others argue, then, similarly, P materializes and historicizes also the mythical imagery of Ezek 32.

Lastly, in many cases, P is not only dependent on the Ezekiel text but also develops particular themes based on the pre-P Exodus narrative or its own literary invention. For instance, the Priestly version of the commissioning of Moses in Exodus 6 contains the motif of the covenant with the patriarchs (v. 4), which is absent in Ezek 20. A redaction critical implication of such an explicit mention of the patriarchal covenant in this verse has been much discussed in recent Pentateuch studies, especially in terms of the literary connection between the Patriarchal and Exodus narratives.³² Nevertheless, either this motif is purely a literary invention by P³³ or simply a reception or creative development of

³² See, for the detailed discussion of this issue, K. Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story: Israel's Dual Origins in the Hebrew Bible* (trans. J. D. Nogalski. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 2010), 271ff.; Jeon, *Call of Moses*, 200ff.

³³ See e.g. E. Otto, "Die nachpriesterschriftliche Pentateuchredaktion," in M. Vervenne (ed.), *Studies in the Book of Exodus* (BETL 126, Leuven: Leuven Univer-

pre-Priestly material,³⁴ the presence of the motif in P lacking in Ezek 20 indicates that the former represents a further developed stage than the latter. Also, arguably, the priestly wonders of the crocodile and the blood are based on the non-Priestly episodes of Moses's staff turning into a snake (Ex 4.2–4) and the plague of blood (Ex 7.14–25*), respectively.³⁵ These may be indicators, particularly for understanding the direction of literary influence between Ezekiel and P, which is still an issue under ongoing debates.

Nevertheless, it would be methodologically inappropriate to apply this conclusion to the entire text of Ezekiel and P. Recent

sity Press, 1996), 61–111, esp. 101–111; K. Schmid, *Genesis and the Moses Story*, 271ff.; idem, "The So-Called Yahwist and the Literary Gap between Genesis and Exodus," in T. B. Dozeman and K. Schmid (eds.), *A Farewell to the Yahwist? The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation* (SBLSymS 34. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006), 29–50; J. C. Gertz, *Tradition und Redaktion in der Exoduserzählung* (FRLANT 189. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2000), 261–304; T. Römer, "Exodus 3–4 und die aktuelle Pentateuchdiskussion" in R. Roukema (ed.), *The Interpretation of Exodus: Festschrift C. Houtman* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 65–79, esp. 74f.; idem, *Israels Väter: Untersuchungen zur Väterthematik im Deuteronomium und in der deuteronomistischen Tradition* (OBO 99. Fribourg/Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1990), 552ff.

³⁴ J. Van Seters, *The Life of Moses: The Yahwist as Historian in Exodus-Numbers* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1994), 35–63; idem, "The Report of the Yahwist's Demise has been Greatly Exaggerated!" in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* 143–157; idem, "The Patriarchs and the Exodus: Bridging the Gap between Two Origin Traditions," in R. Roukema (ed.), *The Interpretation of Exodus: Studies in Honour of Cornelis Houtman* (Leuven: Peeters, 2006), 1–15; C. Levin, *Der Jahwist* (FRLANT 157. Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 317–388; idem, "The Yahwist and the Redactional Link between Genesis and Exodus," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* 131–142; E. Blum, *Studien zur Komposition des Pentateuch* (BZAW 189. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1990), 22ff., 232ff.; idem, "Die literarische Verbindung von Erzvätern und Exodus: Ein Gespräch mit neueren Endredaktionshypothesen," in J. C. Gertz et al. (eds.) *Abschied vom Jahwisten: Die Komposition des Hexateuch in der jüngsten Diskussion* (BZAW 315. Berlin: de Gruyter, 2002), 119–156, esp. 130ff.; D. Carr, "What is Required to Identify Pre-Priestly Narrative Connections between Genesis and Exodus? Some General Reflections and Specific Cases," in *A Farewell to the Yahwist?* 159–180. J. Jeon, *Call of Moses*, 200ff.

³⁵ The recent Pentateuchal scholarship tends to assume post-P date of Ex 4 (e.g. Römer, "Exodus 3–4," 70ff.; Blum, "Verbindung," 134; Schmid, *Genesis*, 188f.; Gertz, *Tradition*, 313ff.; Otto, "nachpriesterschriftliche," 103ff.), yet see, for detailed arguments in favor of pre-P date of Ex 4.1–8 as well as the non-P blood plague (Ex 7.14ff.*), Jeon, *Call of Moses*, 125ff., 195ff.

biblical scholarship tends to find more editorial texts from the later Persian period in both Ezekiel and P, which makes the literary relationship between them more complicated. The simple unidirectional models for the literary influence may no longer be tenable; a mutual influence model should be considered, which requires detailed studies of each relevant passage.

The Foreskinned Fruit in Leviticus 19

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Résumé. Cet article explore le problème posé par Lévitique 19,23 et sa mention d'un fruit incirconcis. Pourquoi une telle image ? Que signifie-t-elle ? Le fruit était-il censé être coupé ou laissé pendre ? Après un bref survol du débat actuel autour de la circoncision dans la Bible hébraïque et dans P, ainsi que du débat autour de la structure de Lévitique 19, cet article se focalise sur l'usage métaphorique du terme « incirconcis » et conclut que le texte décrit une pratique où le fruit est laissé sur l'arbre. Le terme « incirconcis » est employé pour susciter le dégoût et décourager les auditeurs de le manger.

Keywords. Foreskinned fruit, circumcision, fertility, Leviticus 19, disgust.

Introduction

Many scholars agree that circumcision was not something uniquely Israelite, at least not in the pre-exilic period.¹ Most of the surrounding peoples did practice circumcision, including the Egyptians, Edomites, Ammonites, Moabites and Phoenicians, but the Philistines did not.² This observation is based on texts such as

¹ Jakob Wöhrle, "The Integrative Function of the Law of Circumcision," in *The Foreigner and the Law. Perspectives from the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East* (ed. Reinhard Achenbach, Rainer Albertz and Jakob Wöhrle; BZAR 16; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011), 71-109. See especially 72-74. Or, Thomas Römer, "Beschneidung in der Hebräischen Bibel und ihre literarische Begründung in Genesis 17," in *Dem Körper eingeschrieben. Verkörperung zwischen Leiberleben und kulturellem Sinn* (ed. Matthias Jung, Michaela Bauks and Andreas Ackermann; Studien zur Interdisziplinären Anthropologie; Wiesbaden: Springer, 2016), 227-241, especially 228-229.

² Andreas Ruwe, "Beschneidung als interkultureller Brauch und Friedenszeichen Israels. Religionsgeschichtliche Überlegungen zu Genesis 17, Genesis 34, Exodus 4 und Joshua 5." *Theologische Zeitschrift*, 64/4, (2008), 309-342, here 309.

Jeremiah 9:24-25 and Ezekiel 28:10, which mention other nations practising circumcision,³ and a long list of texts referring to the fact that the Philistines were not circumcised.⁴ Many scholars accept that, at that stage, circumcision was practised when boys were adolescents and might even have been associated with marriage. The non-Priestly narrative in Exodus 4:24-26 is often used to support this argument and the fact that it might have been some kind of apotropaic rite.⁵ Apparently, circumcision only became an ethnic marker after the exile, when the rite was in a sense reinvented as a sign of the covenant and was given a far more explicit theological meaning. It was, of course, P and especially Genesis 17 which gave the theological meaning to circumcision. It might also have been at this stage when the rite was changed from one performed on adolescent boys to one practised on boys who were eight days old. Some scholars see at least two layers in Genesis 17, but others dispute this; yet, however one understands the development of the text, it is clear that it now links the covenant with circumcision.⁶

³ See Wöhrle, "The Integrative Function," 72, or Römer "Beschneidung," 228-229.

⁴ Judges 14:3; 15:18; 1 Samuel 14:6; 17:26, 36; 18:25, 27; 31:4; 2 Sam 1:20; 3:14. Noteworthy is especially the story in 1 Samuel 18, where David provides two hundred Philistine foreskins as bride price for Saul's daughter Michal. Olyan describes this text and others as "what can only be called grotesque fetishizing of the foreskin of the alien." Saul M. Olyan, *Rites and Rank. Hierarchy in Biblical Representations of Cult*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 66.

⁵ Robert G. Hall, "Circumcision," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary. Volume 1*. (ed. David N. Freedman et al; New York: Doubleday, 1992), 1025-1031, here, 1027; Römer, "Beschneidung," 237; Wöhrle, "The Integrative Function," 72.

⁶ Wöhrle, "The Integrative Function," 74-78, distinguishes between two layers in Genesis 17. The oldest layer consists of verses 1-8 and 15-22 and reports the covenant with Abraham and promises the birth of Isaac. Then as a second layer was added verses 9-14 and 23-27, which then adds the law of circumcision and a description of how it was practised. Earlier Klaus Grünwaldt, *Exil und Identität*, (BBB 85; Frankfurt: Anton Hain; 1992), 27-45, presented a similar, but far more complex diachronic argument, where verses 9-14 are regarded as a later addition, but not vv. 23-27. Römer, "Beschneidung," 233-235, argues that verses 1-8, 11, 12a, 15-20, 22, 23a*, 24-25 and 26 formed the oldest layer. For Römer it is important to note that since there was a sign in the Priestly covenant with Noah in Genesis 9, why would the authors of P initially leave out a sign in

But this article is interested in one of the examples where “uncircumcised” or “foreskinned” is used in a metaphorical sense, namely Leviticus 19:23-25. As we will see later, there are a few other examples of this usage in the Hebrew Bible, especially in Priestly and post-Priestly texts.

Horticultural holiness?

In his commentary on Leviticus 19:23-25, Jacob Milgrom discusses the text under the heading “Horticultural Holiness (Continued)”.⁷ The “continued” refers back to Milgrom’s earlier discussion of verses 9-10, which will be discussed below.⁸ There are many definitions of horticulture going around, and a quick internet search offers quite a few. A useful definition appears on a South African university’s website. According to the website of Stellenbosch University’s Department of Horticultural Sciences, the subject can be defined as follows:

Horticulture is the science, technology and business involved in intensive plant cultivation for human use – from a garden to the activities of a multinational corporation. It is very diverse in its activities, covering plants for food and non-food crops. Because of the growing consciousness of the enormous challenges of feeding the world’s expanding population in future, the concepts “farm to the fork” and “farm for the future” are extremely important. Both concepts place the emphasis on the sustainable use of our natural resources to produce tasty and nourishing products at the lowest possible cost with the least amount of waste.⁹

the covenant with Abraham? In this regard he agrees with the arguments of Joseph Blenkinsopp, “Abraham as Paradigm in the Priestly History in Genesis,” *JBL* 128/2 (2009): 225-241.

⁷ Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB3A, New York: Doubleday, 2000), 1677-1684.

⁸ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1623.

⁹ <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/agri/departments1/horticulture-sciences> (accessed on 14 August 2015).

Horticulture is thus a modern science, as all sciences are, and it should be clear that many of the concepts used in this definition would have been totally unknown to the ancient Priestly authors of Leviticus. They were not concerned with sustainability, for instance. For the Priestly authors of the first creation narrative the earth was something that needed filling (Gen. 1:28), an idea that we find strange, if not outright dangerous, since we generally believe that the earth is already too full.¹⁰ Still, it is not difficult to imagine that the ancient authors knew something about horticulture, which for them simply meant surviving on agricultural produce. Their very survival depended on getting as much fruit from trees and produce from other plants as possible. Commentators on Leviticus would tell us that the Code of Hammurabi (§ 60) “regarded the fruit of the first four years as unfit for food”.¹¹ The Code of Hammurabi does not provide a reason for why this fruit is unsuitable. Philo (*Virtues* § 157-159), in his interpretation of Leviticus 19:23-25, understood the practice as a case of removing the fruit before it ripens, since leaving it on the tree too long might mean weakening the plant, which is more or less in line with how modern-day horticulturists understand the process.¹² If you leave the fruit on the tree, then the plant wastes resources and energy on ripening the fruit that could have been invested in growth.

With regard to the pericope of Leviticus 19:23-25, there is a fair amount of debate about what “uncircumcised”, or actually “foreskinned” (עֲרֵלָה), might mean, apart from the fact that the fruit cannot be eaten. Is it, as Philo understood it, to refer to removing the fruit in the bud, or is it simply about leaving the fruit, but not harvesting it? The latter would not make sense from a

¹⁰ According to the Global Footprint Network, 13 August was the Earth overshoot day for 2015. This basically means that by August we had already used up our resources for that year and we were going into the red. <http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/> (accessed on 15 August 2015).

¹¹ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1680. See also Gordon J. Wenham, *The Book of Leviticus* (NICOT, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1979), 271; Thomas Hieke, *Leviticus 17-26*, (HTK, Freiburg: Herder, 2014), 744; H. Jagersma, “Leviticus 19.” *Identiteit – vervrying – gemeenschap*. Assen: Van Gorcum, 106 n. 5; Klaus Grünwaldt, *Das Heiligkeitgesetz. Leviticus 17-26*, (BZAW 271; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 243.

¹² Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1684; Hieke, *Leviticus 16-27*, 744.

modern-day horticultural perspective, as stated above – the plant would spend too much energy on the fruit, energy that could have been invested in growing. On the one hand, commentators such as Milgrom and Hieke basically think that the meaning of the term is to treat it like the foreskin and thus to cut it off.¹³ On the other hand, Bernat thinks it means allowing the fruit to just hang, a similar view to that found in many of the older works on Leviticus.¹⁴ Bernat argues that if the authors wanted the fruit removed, then they would have used other verbs to clarify this process such as מול, the verb used to refer to circumcision, or any of the normal verbs for cutting, such as כרת. One also wonders why verse 23 warns against eating the fruit. Eating would only be an option if the fruit were allowed to ripen. We will return to Bernat's point later, but it should be clear that if we follow Bernat, the law does not make much horticultural sense. If we follow Milgrom and Hieke, it does. Yet the question is whether this is a valid criterion to interpret an ancient text, this expectation that it should make sense from our modern-day scientific worldview? Either way, a further important question is why the language of being "uncircumcised" or "foreskinned" is used to describe an agricultural practice in the first place?

Scholars such as Elliger and Jagersma think that the custom described here goes back to earlier Canaanite times, when the fruit of the first three years was left for some field spirits, but it does not explain why the imagery of uncircumcised is used.¹⁵ Some time ago Howard Eilberg-Schwartz answered this question by arguing that the rite of circumcision was always about fertility and by using this metaphorical language here farmers were encouraged to cut off the fruit and thus ensure the yield of the fruit trees in subsequent years.¹⁶ His interpretation of what these laws meant in practical terms is thus similar to that of Milgrom and

¹³ Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1679; Hieke, *Leviticus 16-27*, 744.

¹⁴ David A. Bernat, *Sign of the Covenant: Circumcision in the Priestly Tradition* (Ancient Israel and Its Literature 3, Atlanta: SBL, 2009), 95. Karl Elliger, *Leviticus* (HAT I/4; Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1966), 260; Jagersma, "Leviticus 19", 107.

¹⁵ Elliger, *Leviticus*, 260 and Jagersma, "Leviticus 19," 106.

¹⁶ Howard Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism. An Anthropology of Israelite Religion and Ancient Judaism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 150.

Hieke, but his broader understanding of the origins of the rite is fairly unique and we need to engage with this first before focusing on Leviticus 19 itself. After engaging with the work of Eilberg-Schwartz, we will take a look at the structure of Leviticus 19 in general before moving on to the meaning of “foreskinned”.

In terms of the major diachronic issues, I understand Leviticus 17-26, or the Holiness Legislation, as a post-Priestly text which was created in dialogue with older legal codes such as the Decalogue, the Covenant Code, the Deuteronomic Code and the Priestly Code, by means of a process of inner-biblical exegesis. I thus follow scholars such as Nihan and Otto in this regard.¹⁷ Leviticus 17-26 is different from Leviticus 1-16 in the sense that it includes ethical issues which are mostly absent from the first sixteen chapters. Much of this ethical content was generated in discussion with the other legal codes,¹⁸ but in the Holiness Legislation these ethical commands are integrated into the broader Priestly world view, where the cult and the rituals associated with the cult are still very much central. The Holiness Legislation is thus not only an attempt to move away from the cult to ethics, but rather more to integrate ethics into a worldview still very much dominated by the cult and its rituals. The following discussion of Leviticus 19 will hopefully show what I mean by integrating ethics into a world view dominated by the cult, but first we need to consider the contribution of Eilberg-Schwartz.

¹⁷ Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch* (FAT II/25; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007) and Eckart Otto, “Innerbiblische Exegese im Heiligkeitgesetz Levitikus 17–26,” in *Levitikus als Buch* (ed. Heinz-Josef Fabry and Hans-Winfried Jüngling; BBB 119; Bonn: Philo, 1999), 125–196.

¹⁸ This is obviously how Otto and Nihan would understand it. A scholar such as Israel Knohl has another kind of inner-biblical discussion in mind, namely between the authors of the Holiness Legislation (HS for him) and the classic prophets. See Israel Knohl, *The Sanctuary of Silence: The Priestly Torah and the Holiness School* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1995), 212–215.

Circumcision and fertility?

It is important to understand that Eilberg-Schwartz offers an anthropology of ancient Israelite religion and, when it comes to understanding circumcision, this means making use of comparative ethnographic material in order to argue “that Israelite circumcision in fact carried many of the same meanings as circumcision rites practiced in other societies.”¹⁹ Eilberg-Schwartz is highly conscious of the methodological pitfalls that might threaten such a study and thus he grounds his “interpretation of the Israelite data in a symbolic exegesis of relevant biblical passages.” By “symbolic” he means teasing out “implicit meanings” which do not “always find explicit articulation in Israelite literature.”²⁰ From the comparative material that Eilberg-Schwartz presents from different African societies, it is clear that themes such as fertility, virility, maturity and genealogy are all present in African rites of circumcision.²¹ Then when Eilberg-Schwartz engages with Genesis 17, he asks whether there is any connection between circumcision as symbol of the covenant and the content of the covenant itself.²² If the promise of fertility is made to Abraham (Gen. 17:4-6), why then are biblical critics so adamant in denying any link between fertility and circumcision? For Eilberg-Schwartz, the link between circumcision and fertility is clear enough although implicit.²³

Circumcision is a symbol that God will make Abraham fruitful and multiply. At the same time, circumcision is also a fulfillment of that promise since the removal of the foreskin symbolically readies the organ for reproduction.

¹⁹ Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism*, 143. “Anthropology” here refers to the academic discipline in the social sciences and not to a theological anthropology.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid., 144-146.

²² Ibid., 146-148.

²³ Ibid., 148.

The major flaw in this interpretation is that it does not explain why the Priestly authors changed the practice of circumcision into something which takes place on the eighth day and not during adolescence, as in all the comparative material presented by Eilberg-Schwartz. Is the point for P not about adding theological meaning to an ancient rite? For Römer, for instance, this attempt to add theological meaning is the result of the post-exilic context in which the Judean exiles were confronted by other nations who did not practise circumcision.²⁴ This forced the Priestly circles responsible for texts such as Genesis 17 to reflect on the meaning and praxis of circumcision, and at this time the rite started to become more of an ethnic marker. Eilberg-Schwartz is correct that part of the promise to Abraham is descendants and thus implicitly fertility, but would the idea of the 99-year-old Abraham getting Sarah pregnant by means of a better equipped penis not actually be theologically counterproductive? Abraham did manage to create Ishmael, after all, with a foreskin. Robert Hall acknowledges that the authors of P “drew gladly upon traditions which claimed that circumcision ensured many offspring” and then describes these associations of fertility as “magical” before he argues:²⁵

But, since they were uncomfortable with the magical associations these claims had, the authors invented a new mode of operation: circumcision does not bring about these blessings; God has promised them. Circumcision is a mnemonic sign of the covenant with God.

God thus becomes the guarantor of fertility and descendants, not a better equipped penis. That is the theological message of P and that is why the link is made between circumcision and the covenant. Circumcision now reminds adherents of the covenant, and it is the latter which guarantees descendants.

When Eilberg-Schwartz discusses the laws on foreskinned fruit in Leviticus 19, he argues that it is not about leaving the fruit to hang, but more about “equating a juvenile fruit tree with an un-

²⁴ Römer, “Beschneidung,” 230-231.

²⁵ Hall, “Circumcision,” 1027.

circumcised Israelite male” and that the passage is in line with his comparative material. Just as the removal of the foreskin helps the tree to yield more fruit, so the “removal of a male’s foreskin prepares him for a maximal yield.”²⁶ Once again, one should add that the Israelite “male” he is talking of is basically eight days old and the issue of “yield” is not really in the picture yet. Furthermore, as we already mentioned in the light of Bernat’s comments, the text does not talk about removing anything. This might be implied, as some scholars would argue, but it is simply not explicitly required and, as already said above, why the command against eating it if the fruit was not allowed to ripen?

Towards the end of the chapter Eilberg-Schwartz offers two arguments for why he thinks P changed the rite of circumcision.²⁷ Firstly, it is performed on the eighth day, since Leviticus 12:1-2 makes it clear that a woman enters a lesser state of impurity at that time (p. 174), and secondly the question is: why circumcise so close to birth instead of in adolescence, as other cultures do?²⁸ The answer to the latter question has to do with a debate about descent. For P one is born into the covenant and this not a matter of choice. As he puts it:²⁹

Entrance into the covenant was not a mature, reflective decision of adult life. It is for this reason that circumcision is performed as close to birth as possible.

This sounds correct in the light of wider debates about the P covenant being unconditional or unilateral, but what is left of the idea of circumcision and fertility?³⁰ Eilberg-Schwartz still thinks

²⁶ Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism*, 150.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 174-176.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 174.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 175.

³⁰ See, for instance, the discussion in Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Old Testament* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), 153-159. Ska argues that the covenant in P is unilateral and unconditional. The authors of P were looking for “solid foundations” in the past on which to rebuild Israel. These foundations are then found to be “religious” and are found in the everlasting covenant between YHWH and Abraham (p. 157). For a more nuanced view, see Christophe Nihan, “The Priestly Covenant, Its Reinterpretation, and the Composition of ‘P’” in *The*

that although “Israelite circumcision did not incorporate themes of virility,” nevertheless “it did symbolize the initiate’s fertility.”³¹ I am not so sure and would think it makes more sense to argue, like Hall above, that the authors were consciously trying to move away from this “magical” association of circumcision with fertility. It makes more sense to argue that the fertility theme disappears, but we are left with circumcision as a reminder of covenant and in the covenant God himself guarantees fertility and progeny, and not the better equipped penis of an eight-day-old boy.

To sum up, I would thus argue that Eilberg-Schwartz’s contribution lies in the fact that he helps us to understand what circumcision might have meant in an older pre-exilic time for Israel and all its neighbours who practised it. Yet it seems that the Priestly authors actually wanted to move away from that ancient understanding of circumcision, as something which ensures fertility, to a far more theological understanding of the rite. For them God himself was the guarantor of fertility, not better equipped reproductive tools. This brings us to the post-Priestly text of Leviticus 19, and we have already seen that Eilberg-Schwartz’s interpretation of this text has the same weaknesses as those offered by scholars such as Milgrom and Hieke.

Structure of Leviticus 19

The quest to find some unifying theme or organising principle for Leviticus 19 had greatly occupied scholars in the past, with many of them simply concluding that there is no such thing. According to Milgrom, this chapter “differs from all other priestly pericopes (in both P and H).”³² Each of the other pericopes “expounds a

Strata of the Priestly Writings. Contemporary Debate and Future Directions (ed. Sarah Shectman and Joel S. Baden; ATANT 95; Zürich: TVZ; 2009), 87-134. For Nihan the covenant is indeed “everlasting,” but he warns that we should be careful when using terms like “unilateral” or “unconditional” (pp. 102-103). The covenant cannot be annulled, but this does not exclude the fact that persons responsible may be punished for not obeying the covenant.

³¹ Eilberg-Schwartz, *The Savage in Judaism*, 175.

³² Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1596.

unifying theme.” We encounter problems from a form-critical perspective, since we find a mixture of apodictic and casuistic law, but also a mixture of third person and second person, singular and plural texts, or *Numeruswechsel*, and we have a mixture of content which for modern people simply seems strange or unimaginable. Elliger put it well when he said:³³

Lv 19 ist eine summe von Geboten und Verboten sehr verschiedenen Inhalts und sehr verschiedener Form. Es ist zweifellos keine Einheit von Hause aus, wie der Wechsel von kasuistischen und apodiktischem Stil, von singularischer und pluralischer Anrede, auch der Wechsel der Schlußformeln zeigt.

Thus, although Leviticus 19:19 warns the addressees against mixing seeds when sowing, or animals when breeding, or material when making clothes, the ancient authors of Leviticus 19 had no qualms about mixing different laws that for modern-day readers simply do not belong together. Yet somehow it must have made sense to the authors of Leviticus 19 to mix these different laws. What is clear about the chapter, though, is that it introduces the holiness language which actually gave this collection of laws its name.³⁴

The call to holiness is found in 19:2; 20:7, 8, 26; 21:7-8, 23; 22:16 and 32 and is thus limited to chapters 19-22. We also find two further examples at the end of chapter 11 (vv. 44 and 45), the chapter on clean and unclean food, and these verses are usually regarded as on the same diachronic level as the Holiness Legislation.³⁵ Another big debate has also been on the relation between

³³ Elliger, *Leviticus*, 244.

³⁴ The concept “Heiligkeitsetz” was used for the first time in 1877 by Klostermann. He actually uses the term in a rather by-the-way fashion when he refers to a legal collection in Leviticus 18-25 “die ich von nun an kurz ‘das Heiligkeitsetz’ nennen will...” The name stuck and later chapter 17 was also added. See August Klostermann, “Beiträge zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs,” *Zeitschrift für die gesammte lutherische Theologie und Kirche*, 38/3, (1877): 401-445, here 416.

³⁵ Knohl, *Sanctuary of Silence*, 104-106; Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1332-1334 and Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 569.

Leviticus 19 and the Decalogue. Scholars agree that some of the laws of the Decalogue are quoted and reinterpreted,³⁶ while some commentators such as Reventlow actually think that the laws of the Decalogue played some kind of structural role.³⁷ In his very recent commentary on Leviticus, Thomas Hieke argues:³⁸

Die Gültigkeit des Dekalogs ist unumstritten vorausgesetzt – aber vielleicht soll durch diese Gestaltungsweise auch angedeutet werden, dass der Dekalog nicht alles ist. Der Alltag ist vielfältiger, und für “Heiligkeit” ist mehr gefordert als die Erfüllung eines Mindeststandards, wie ihn der Dekalog darstellt.³⁹

Thus, yes, the Decalogue is important and valid, but it was reinterpreted and the point was to show that the Decalogue is not sufficient. It is not diverse or varied enough to truly represent the diverse nature of everyday life. This means that the very diverse nature of this chapter was part of its central message. *Diversity is the central theme.* According to the authors of the Holiness Legislation, therefore, holiness asks *more* of the addressees than what is presented in the Decalogue. The quest for holiness lays claim to far more diverse aspects of life than covered in the Decalogue, and one of these diverse aspects is obviously agricultural practice.

With regard to the structure of Leviticus 19, Hieke wants to divide the chapter into two parts with the parenthetic text of verse 19a (you shall keep my statutes) as a hinge.⁴⁰ Thus, for Hieke, the

³⁶ See, for instance, Hieke, *Leviticus 16-27*, 712, Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 467, Matthia Köckert, *Leben in Gottes Gegenwart: Studien zum Verständnis des Gesetzes im Alten Testament* (FAT 43; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2004), 158-159, Milgrom, *Leviticus 17-22*, 1608-1615, Baruch Levine, *Leviticus (JPS)* (New York: Jewish Publication Society, 1989), 123-124 and Alfred Cholewinski, *Heiligkeitgesetz und Deuteronomium: Eine vergleichende Studie* (AnBib 66; Rome: Biblical Institute Press, 1976), 259-267.

³⁷ Henning G. Reventlow, *Das Heiligkeitgesetz formgeschichtlich untersucht* (WMANT 6, Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), 65-78.

³⁸ Hieke, *Leviticus 16-27*, 707.

³⁹ See John E. Hartley, *Leviticus*. (WBC 3; Dallas: Word, 1992), 309 for a similar argument: “This speech presents numerous laws pertaining to the practice of holiness in all aspects of daily life.”

⁴⁰ Hieke, *Leviticus 16-27*, 704-706.

chapter starts with the heading in verses 1-2a, followed by the exhortation to be holy (v. 19:2aβ, b). Then we have two larger sections (vv. 3-18 and vv. 19b-36), which are mixtures of different kinds of laws, concluded by v. 37, which is parenetic. Linking the two bigger sections is the hinge in 19a, also a parenetic text. When Hieke compares the two bigger sections, then he thinks that certain elements are repeated between the two, but he does not see the two sections as truly parallel structures. In that sense he differs from Nihan, who in an earlier study presented the following table as a summary of the larger structure of the chapter:⁴¹

General exhortation to holiness (19:2aβ, b)	Transition: New exhortation: "Keep my statutes" (v. 19αα)
⇓	⇓
(a) Fundamental prescriptions: parents, the Sabbath, prohibition of apostasy and idolatry (v. 3-4)	(a') Fundamental prescription: prohibition of mixtures (v. 19aβ, γ, b)
(b) Casuistic laws: sacrifice (v. 5-8) and cultivation of the land (v. 9-10)	(b') Casuistic laws: sacrifice (v. 20-22) and cultivation of the land (v. 23-25)
(c) Other prescriptions: loyalty to the fellow Israelite (v. 11-18)	(c') Other prescriptions: loyalty to Yahweh and the fellow Israelite, including the resident alien (v. 26-36)
	⇓
Final exhortation: "Keep and practice <i>all</i> my statutes and <i>all</i> my ordinances" (v. 37)	

This seems to be the best structure that scholars have come up with.⁴² There are times when not everything fits in and the struc-

⁴¹ Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 482. Nihan actually gets his idea from Eckart Otto, *Theologische Ethik des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1994), 245-246, who describes the chapter as a diptych. Otto was building on the idea offered by Elliger, *Leviticus*, 245, that the chapter could broadly be divided into two chapters, although as we saw above, Elliger did not think there was much order in the chapter as it is. Nihan further refines the idea of Otto.

⁴² See also Andreas Ruwe, "Heiligkeitsgesetz" und "Priesterschrift." *Literaturgeschichtliche und rechtssystematische Untersuchungen zu Leviticus 17,1-26,2* (FAT 26; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1999), 194, for a similar view.

ture seems a bit forced. For example, are verses 20 to 22 really about sacrifices? The **אֲשָׁם** is mentioned in verses 21 and 22, but as a whole the pericope is actually about something else, namely what should happen when somebody slept with a slave woman who was betrothed to somebody else. Also, if one compares (c) with (c'), both texts are fairly long and in themselves a mixture of different laws; (c) concludes with the command to love your neighbour (v. 18), but the command to love the stranger in (c') already appears in verse 34, and thus two verses before the end of (c'). But then we are probably looking for too much symmetry in the ancient text and our focus should actually be on (b) and (b'). Nihan is correct that both pericopes are, from a formal perspective, casuistic law. Both present different conditional or temporal sentences⁴³ and verses 5-8 are about when you should eat the **זֶבַח שְׁלָמִים**, whereas verses 20-22 mention the **אֲשָׁם** as a solution to a different problem. Both vv. 5-8 and 20-22 thus mention sacrifices.

More importantly for our argument, both verses 9-10 and 23-25 are about agricultural practices. Interestingly, both pericopes share a fair amount of vocabulary with chapters 23, 25 and even 26 of Leviticus. Leviticus 19:10 is identical to 23:22. In verses 9-10 we also find words like **קָצַר** (harvest, verb),⁴⁴ field (**שָׂדֶה**)⁴⁵ and vineyard (**כֶּרֶם**),⁴⁶ not to mention **גֵּר**, which also features a lot in chapter 25.⁴⁷ In verses 23-25 we find fruit (**פֶּרִי**),⁴⁸ harvest (**תְּבוּאָה**, noun),⁴⁹ and verse 23 starts with **וְכִי־תִבְנוּ אֶל־הָאָרֶץ**, also found in 23:10 and 25:2. The expression “your land” (**אֶרְצְכֶם**) is basically only found in chapters 19, 23, 25 and 26.⁵⁰ All of these concepts are associated with agriculture and they simply say that, just like

⁴³ Verses 5, 20 and 23 start with **כִּי** to introduce the protasis of the conditional sentence. Verse 9 actually starts with a **כִּי** + infinitive construct, which expresses a temporal function, but is usually not associated with casuistic law.

⁴⁴ Leviticus 19:9(×2); 23:10, 22(×2); 25:5 and 11.

⁴⁵ Leviticus 17:5; 19:9, 19; 23:22; 25:3, 4, 12, 31, 34; 26:4 and 22.

⁴⁶ Leviticus 19:10(×2), 25:3 and 4.

⁴⁷ Leviticus 16:29; 17:8, 10, 12, 13, 15; 18:26; 19:10, 33, 34(×2); 20:2, 22:18; 23:22; 24:19, 22; 25:23, 35, 47(×3).

⁴⁸ Leviticus 23:40; 25:29; 26:4 and 20.

⁴⁹ Leviticus 23:39; 25:3, 7, 12, 15, 16, 20, 21 and 22(×2).

⁵⁰ Leviticus 19:9, 33; 22:24; 23:22; 25:9 and 45 and 26:1, 5, 6, 19, 20 and 33. The example from chapter 22 is obviously the exception.

chapters 23, 25 and 26, so verses 9-10 and 23-25 of chapter 19 are also interested in agriculture.

Verses 9-10 deal with taking care of vulnerable people like the poor and the גֵּר. Verses 23-25 indicate when one is supposed to start eating the fruit of the trees you planted. Nihan describes the two laws as follows:⁵¹

Thus, the two laws deal with the *setting apart* of the land's produce, once for the *personae miserae* and once for Yahweh himself; in Lev 23:15-21, 22, the two aspects are likewise closely linked.

Leviticus 23:15-21 deal with the Feast of Weeks and 23:22 with the *personae miserae*. The text on the Festival of Weeks is part of a larger pericope on the “celebration of First Fruits”, which is in fact about presenting things to Yahweh as the sole owner of the land.⁵² But is this what is happening with the fruit in verses 23 and 24? Yes, the fruit of the fourth year is holy or dedicated to YHWH (קֹדֶשׁ הַלּוּלִים לַיהוָה), but clearly this is not the case for the first three years. Does the fact that the fruit may not be eaten mean that it is necessarily dedicated to YHWH? I do not think so. Why then describe it as “foreskinned”? Quite a few scholars have argued that the term “foreskinned” is clearly a derogatory term. Römer, for instance, mentions that in a text such as Isaiah 52:1 “foreskinned” (עָרֵל) and “unclean” (טָמֵא) are portrayed as parallel.⁵³ Similarly, Grünwaldt argues that since “die Unbeschittenheit der Baumfrüchte sie als kultische Gabe an Jahwe ausschließt, ist sie mit Unreinheit gleichzusetzen.”⁵⁴ As we will see below, “foreskinned”, when used metaphorically, is usually used to describe things which YHWH does not like, to put it mildly. Thus, during the first three years, fruit is described by means of a very derogatory metaphorical usage of the term “foreskinned”. It seems clear that “foreskinned” becomes a synonym for “unclean”.

⁵¹ Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 471.

⁵² Nihan, *From Priestly Torah*, 507.

⁵³ Römer, “Beschneidung,” 229.

⁵⁴ Grünwaldt, *Exil und Identität*, 68. In his later work, Grünwaldt, *Heiligkeitsetz*, 243, describes this fruit as “unwürdig”.

Foreskinned fruit, hearts and lips

Three different words are used in Leviticus 19:23, all consisting of the root עָרַל. We have a verb in the form of a Qal perfect, which is a *hapax legomenon*. The only other occurrence of the verb is a Niphal imperative in Habakkuk 2:16, translated as “show the foreskin”.⁵⁵ Then we have the female noun (עָרְלָה) for foreskin and later in the same verse we find an adjective (עָרֵל) meaning uncircumcised or foreskinned.⁵⁶ This adjective is also used in Leviticus 26:41 to describe the uncircumcised hearts of the addressees in the land of their enemies, hearts which they are to humble.

Leviticus 26:41 is part of a larger pericope which starts in verse 40, in which things take a turn for the better at the end of a rather dark chapter. In verse 40 the addressees confess their iniquities and then in verse 41 they humble their uncircumcised hearts and the positive outcome in verse 42 is that YHWH will remember his covenant with Jacob, Isaac and Abraham. At least it is clear what should happen to an uncircumcised heart; it should be humbled (Niphal of כָּנַע) and that presumably would circumcise it.

The strange thing about the Holiness Legislation is that it uses the concept “uncircumcised” or “foreskinned” on only two occasions and always with a metaphorical meaning. It never uses the positive term to be circumcised (מָוֵל). In the rest of Leviticus the term is only found in 12:3 as part of the law on how long a woman remains unclean after the birth of the child. This text is usually considered to be part of P and the term clearly has a literal meaning. This verse specifically states that “the flesh of his foreskin” must be circumcised on the eighth day. We have another example of the metaphorical use of “foreskinned” or “uncircumcised” in Exodus 6 with reference to the lips of Moses. This text is also considered part of P and is thus older than the Holiness Legislation.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ See David J.A. Clines (ed.) *The Dictionary of Classical Hebrew. Volume VI* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2007.), 562.

⁵⁶ This adjective (עָרֵל) is translated in the LXX as ἀπερίκαθαρτος with a similar meaning of “impure” and only occurs here in Leviticus 19:23. Yet the example of the same adjective is translated as ἀπερίτμητος in Leviticus 26:41.

⁵⁷ Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus* (Eerdmans Critical Commentary; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; 2009), 159-175.

In his monograph on the covenant and circumcision, Bernat identifies three examples of “foreskin metaphors” in Priestly texts, and these are the texts just mentioned, namely Exodus 6:12, 30 and then Leviticus 19:23 and 26:41.⁵⁸ In the first part of his book, Bernat starts by focusing on texts such as Genesis 17 and 21:1-5.⁵⁹ Bernat shows that it is clear that circumcision and covenant are linked from the very beginning in the Priestly text.⁶⁰ Rejecting circumcision amounts to rejecting the covenant. In his chapter on the foreskinned lips of Moses in Exodus 6 he understands the expression as conveying criticism of Moses, a Moses portrayed as blatantly unwilling to communicate YHWH’s covenantal message.⁶¹ It is a not-so-subtle attempt to denigrate Moses at the expense of Aaron.⁶²

This might make some sense when it comes to Exodus 6, but strangely covenant plays no role in Bernat’s description of Leviticus 19:23.⁶³ It also clearly plays a role in Leviticus 26, since humbling of the foreskinned heart there leads to YHWH remembering the covenant. For Bernat, Leviticus 19:23 is a case of complex imagery in which the “fruit is the foreskin; thus, by extension the tree is the penis.”⁶⁴ He then attempts to show why the Priestly authors used this strange imagery. Bernat sees a link between this law and the laws on firstlings, who all belong to YHWH. I quote:⁶⁵

Since the foreskin of a child remains until he is ritually viable on the eighth day, there is clear conceptual overlap between the two regulations. Finally, like the foreskin on the end of a penis, fruit hangs off the end (branch) of a tree or vine; thus, the metaphor arises from a common-sense association.

⁵⁸ Bernat, *Sign of the Covenant*, 83-113. It should be obvious that Bernat does not distinguish between P and H as many scholars do today.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 13-78.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 24-26.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 87.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 88.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 91-96.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 93. See similarly Römer, “Beschneidung,” 239, who says that in “diesem Bild werden die Früchte mit einer Vorhaut verglichen, der Baum mit einem Penis.”

⁶⁵ Bernat, *Sign of the Covenant*, 93-94.

The three/four/five pattern, as opposed to seven/eight of עֶרְלָה and circumcision, is the result of the combination of typology and horticultural reality.

Although I find his argument here speculative, it still might be plausible. As the boy becomes “ritually viable” on day eight, so the fruit of the tree is also off limits for three/four years. I have already mentioned that Bernat thinks that the idea of the text was to leave the fruit, not to cut it. In support of his argument I already asked why verse 23 concludes with the clause “you shall not eat” (לֹא יֵאָכְלֵהּ). If the fruit was cut off in the bud, as Eilberg-Schwartz, Milgrom and Hieke (following Philo) understand it, eating would not have been an option. If the fruit was left to ripen, then eating became an option. Who would not be tempted to eat fruit hanging from a young tree? In this light and the fact that we have already shown that the term is clearly derogatory, one wonders if the purpose of this law was not to invoke a strong emotion such as disgust. The fruit is like the foreskin, it is disgusting, do not eat it! But then עֶרְלָה in this case does not really fit into the broader meaning of circumcision, which is linked to the covenant. And as I said before, if the fruit was left hanging, it did not really make sense from a horticultural perspective. The young tree would waste energy on unnecessary fruit. In the next part of the article I would like to make a more circumstantial case that, despite all the reservations just mentioned, understanding “foreskinned” as a term which is used here to invoke disgust might not be all that far-fetched.

Disgust

Eve Feinstein’s book on Leviticus 18 makes a lot of terms such as “abhorrence” (שִׁקָּץ) and “abomination” (תועבה), terms used in the Holiness Legislation in chapter 18, but also in Leviticus 11 for

forbidden foods.⁶⁶ She also lists other verbs which describe a similar human response of disgust, which she formulates as follows:⁶⁷

to abominate, abhor, or revile something is to feel a sense of loathing toward it and to treat it in accordance with that feeling – to reject and shun it.

Later on the same page she continues:

The terms “abominate,” “abhor,” and “revile” are examples of disgust language. As we shall see, terms for disgust are often used to describe certain physical elicitors, such as food and body products, as well as a wide variety of objectionable people, practices, and ideas.

She never refers to the foreskinned fruit of Leviticus 19 as an example, but the language of disgust is used frequently in the Holiness Legislation, like the land vomiting out its inhabitants (Lev. 18:25, 28, 20:22) and the other terms mentioned above. Feinstein refers to “body products,” so why could one not add “body parts” like the foreskin? Thus, in this interpretation food is referred to as a “body part” with the objective of making the food less desirable in order for it to be shunned. Furthermore, there are a lot of non-Priestly narrative texts from the Hebrew Bible which describe “objectionable people” by means of the term עֵרֵל, with the Philistines often in the sights of the narrators (see footnote 4). Olyan argues that “to be uncircumcised in early texts such as Genesis 34 and 1 Samuel 18 is to be emblematically alien.”⁶⁸ Foreskinned people are to be shunned.

Feinstein also draws from the earlier work of Thomas Kazen.⁶⁹ Kazen’s main argument is that ideas of both immorality and

⁶⁶ Eve L. Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014). See especially 12-23.

⁶⁷ Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution*, 21.

⁶⁸ Olyan, *Rites and Rank*, 66.

⁶⁹ Thomas Kazen, “Dirt and Disgust: Body and Morality in Biblical Purity Laws,” in *Perspectives on Purity and Purification in the Bible* (ed. Naphtali S. Meshel, Jeffrey Stackert, David P. Wright and Baruch J. Schwartz; LHB/OTS 474; London: T & T Clark, 2008), 43-64. See Feinstein, *Sexual Pollution*, 7.

uncleanness developed out of the human emotion of disgust. Similar to Feinstein, Kazen points out all the terms of disgust used in especially chapters 18 to 20 of Leviticus. We have already mentioned *תועבה*, but Kazen adds *זִמָּה* (Lev 18:17 and 19:29) and *תִּבְלָה* (Lev 18:23 and 20:12).⁷⁰ He also points to the verb *גָּעַל*, often found in Leviticus 26 to describe the loathing or lack thereof of God for his people (vv. 11 and 30) and the loathing of the people of God's commands (v. 15). Kazen concludes his discussion of the Holiness Legislation as follows:⁷¹

When feelings of disgust are understood as lying at the base of a number of purity rules as well as moral ideas for which purity language is occasionally used, their interrelationship is more easily understood.

Kazen is, of course, interested in the origins of uncleanness and immorality as well as the relationship between the two, and for him the link lies in human emotions, especially disgust. But is there any relation between “uncleanness” and “foreskinned”? We have already shown that in a text such as Isaiah 52:1 *טָמֵא* and *עָרְלָה* are portrayed as parallel. One could also add that the LXX translates *עָרְלָה* in Leviticus 19:23 with *ἄκαθάρσια*, which BGD translates as “impure” and this is usually the equivalent for Hebrew *טָמֵא*. In his discussion of Genesis 34, Olyan suggests that “the foreskin was constructed as an agent of defilement by the circles who produced that narrative.”⁷² There seems a fair amount of semantic overlap in many texts from the Hebrew Bible between “foreskinned” and “unclean/impure”.

If the language of disgust is used so extensively in the Holiness Legislation, and especially chapters 18 to 20, would it not be possible to argue that the use of “foreskinned” in Leviticus 19:23 is another example of the author attempting to evoke disgust in order to convince his audience to abstain from doing something – in this case to abstain from eating the fruit of young trees? I

⁷⁰ Kazen, “Dirt and Disgust,” 59-60.

⁷¹ Kazen, “Dirt and Disgust,” 61.

⁷² Olyan, *Rites and rank*, 65.

would thus venture to suggest that referring to the foreskinned fruit is another example of such language. The purpose is to present the fruit of the first three years as disgusting, so that the addressees will not eat it. Let me sum up my argument.

Conclusion

We started this article by referring to the broader debate about circumcision. There is a fair amount of consensus that circumcision gained some importance after the exile, as can be seen from a Priestly text such as Genesis 17. Studies such as the one by Eilberg-Schwartz, which links circumcision and fertility, might explain how circumcision was viewed before the exile, but cannot help us to understand this rite better in Priestly texts. I argue that P probably wanted to move away from the association with fertility in order to present a theological understanding of circumcision by linking it with the covenant.

With regard to Leviticus 19, I tried to show that the (post-) Priestly authors of this text wanted to incorporate all facets of life into their quest for holiness. This included the Decalogue, but also other laws on sacrifices and agriculture. Verses 9-10 show how parts of the harvest should be dedicated to vulnerable people. Verses 23-25 incorporated normal everyday agricultural practice known in the Ancient Near East into the holiness practices. It might be that the practice was to cut off the bud, which would make horticultural sense, but for the Priestly authors the question was not about horticultural sense, but about finding Priestly language to describe the practice. The practice which they eventually describe entails leaving the fruit, but not eating it.

Why did they use “foreskinned”? It seems clear that the term has a derogatory meaning, often similar to “unclean”, and my argument was that they might have taken this one step further by attempting to evoke the emotion of disgust. This is the only case where the term is used as such, but as Bernat has shown, there are at least two other examples of using “foreskinned” in a metaphorical fashion in Priestly and post-Priestly texts. And as Weinstein and Kazen have shown, the authors of the Holiness Legisla-

tion often used other terms to evoke disgust. I also think that Bernat is probably right that there was some kind of common sense association going on, which conjures up images of hanging fruit in association with bodily parts. Images that most of us would actually like to get out of our heads and keep them out.

« Le lieu que YHWH aura choisi ». Une perspective narrative, historique et philologique

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Abstract. *The expression “the place that YHWH has chosen / will choose”, found in Deut 12-26 and 31, is studied in narrative, historical and philological perspectives. Each separate approach is limited but taken together they lead toward the conclusion that the place is not yet chosen. In any case, the choice of YHWH should precede the building of an altar or a sanctuary by the people. However, the common verbal form used to express such an idea is a qatal form (= בחר). These observations lead first to the understanding of the expression as “the place that YHWH will have chosen”, and second to the conclusion that exclusive readings of both sides are late.*

La question du lieu que YHWH a choisi ou choisira, qu'on trouve principalement dans le Code deutéronomique (Dt 12-26), semble avoir pris un tournant décisif. Elle est souvent traitée, à juste titre, en même temps que celle de la lecture « Garizim » ou « Ébal » en Dt 27,4. Plusieurs publications récentes optent pour l'ancienneté des lectures samaritaines, respectivement « le lieu que YHWH a choisi » (Dt 12-26) en lisant le texte hébreu en accompli (*qatal*), ainsi que « le mont Garizim » (Dt 27,4). L'accomplissement des prescriptions de Dt 27 dans le livre de Josué fait également l'objet de débats qui posent la question de la forme textuelle la plus ancienne de ces mêmes prescriptions.

Cet article propose d'élargir le champ d'observation du slogan « le lieu que YHWH a choisi/choisira » au delà de la critique textuelle¹ en intégrant les approches narrative, historique et philolo-

¹ Voir Adrian Schenker, « Textgeschichtliches zum Samaritanischen Pentateuch und Samareitikon. Zur Textgeschichte des Pentateuchs im 2. Jh. v.Chr. », in Menachem Mor, Friedrich V. Reiterer (eds.), *Samaritans: Past and Present* :

gique. Chacune de ces approches apporte une contribution propre et partielle. En revanche, mises ensemble, elles convergent vers la compréhension « le lieu que YHWH aura choisi », laissant entendre que ce choix n'est pas encore fait. En revanche, la forme verbale qui exprime cette idée est naturellement au *qatal*. Les interprétations qui se limitent à un sanctuaire unique dans un lieu précis, Jérusalem ou Garizim, sont partielles et tardives.

1. Pourquoi le lieu n'est-il pas nommé ?

En observant la progression narrative du Deutéronome en général et du Code deutéronomique (Dt 12-26) en particulier, on est frappé par l'insistance de ce texte sur le lieu que YHWH a choisi ou qu'il choisira. Ce qui est particulier est que l'évocation de ce lieu revient vingt fois sans jamais le révéler (Dt 12,5.11.14.18.21.26 ; 14,23.24.25 ; 15,20 ; 16,2.6.7.11.15.16 ; 17,8.10 ; 18,6 ; 26,2). En dehors du Code deutéronomique, la même évocation est connue en Dt 31,11. S'il s'agit d'un lieu unique et déterminé, qu'il ait déjà été choisi ou non, alors ces nombreuses occurrences deviennent narrativement étranges. Cette manière d'annoncer les choses ressemble en effet à une sorte de jeu de cache-cache qui ne correspond pas aux autres annonces connues dans le Pentateuque.

Dans d'autres récits du Pentateuque, YHWH annonce souvent rapidement et clairement ses intentions. Il n'y a pas de raison qu'il ait gardé un tel mystère sur le lieu où le peuple devait spécialement l'adorer une fois en terre promise. Quelques exemples le démontrent.

a) Lorsque YHWH demande à Abraham de partir vers un pays qu'il lui montrerait (Gn 12,1), aussi bien Abraham que le lecteur apprennent assez vite que ce pays est Canaan (Gn 12,5-7).

b) Lorsque YHWH s'adresse à Moïse pour le charger de faire sortir le peuple d'Israël d'Égypte, et Moïse et le lecteur comprennent tout de suite que le lieu de destination est le pays de Canaan (Ex 3,7-8).

c) Le texte de Dt 11,29-30 nomme Garizim et Ébal, respectivement comme montagnes de la bénédiction et de la malédiction, où le peuple devait se rendre après avoir passé le Jourdain. Le texte y ajoute même des compléments de géolocalisation². Les deux montagnes sont encore citées en Dt 27,11 pour préciser comment les tribus y seront réparties. Sur ces éléments, le Texte Massorétique (TM) et le Pentateuque samaritain (Sam) s'accordent. La critique élargie à d'autres témoins textuels ne relève pas non plus de différences particulières entre les deux textes. Cela montre qu'il était tout à fait possible de citer un lieu précis dans le pays que le peuple n'avait pas encore conquis. L'argument selon lequel on ne pouvait pas nommer Jérusalem alors qu'elle n'était pas encore conquise ne tient donc pas³.

En revanche, on connaît le passage de Gn 15,13-16 où YHWH annonce à Abraham une période douloureuse pour sa descendance. Abraham mourra sans avoir appris le nom du pays dans lequel l'oppression se passera. Cependant, le lecteur est mis au courant de l'accomplissement de cette annonce en Ex 1-12. De toute manière, Dt 12-26 et 31 est d'une nature différente, puisqu'il s'agit d'instructions données au peuple pour qu'il sache comment se comporter dès qu'il sera en terre promise.

La particularité du Code deutéronomique est qu'il annonce une vingtaine de fois le lieu que YHWH a choisi ou qu'il choisira sans que ni les acteurs Israélites du récit ni le lecteur ne comprennent de quel lieu il s'agit. C'est une anomalie narrative qui fait penser, d'une part, qu'en réalité le lieu que YHWH a choisi ou qu'il choisira n'est pas un lieu unique et précis, et d'autre part que ce lieu n'est pas encore déterminé. À ce niveau, la question n'est

² Le plus du Pentateuque Samaritain « en face de Sichem » est habituellement considéré comme un samaritanisme. Dans un article récent, Adrian Schenker soutient l'hypothèse de son ancienneté. C'est le Texte Massorétique qui l'aurait enlevé pour des raisons idéologiques. Adrian Schenker, « An Original Reading of the Samaritan Pentateuch in Deut 11,30 », in Hans Ausloos, Bénédicte Lemmelijn (eds.), *A Pillar of Cloud to Guide. Text-Critical, Redactional, and Linguistic Perspectives on the Old Testament in Honour of Marc Vervenne*, BETL 249, Leuven, Paris, Walpole, MA : Peeters, 2014, p. 437-447.

³ Voir la présentation succincte du problème dans Carmel McCarthy, *Deuteronomy* BHQ 5, Stuttgart : Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2007, p. 84*-85*.

donc pas de savoir si YHWH choisira le lieu pour son nom ou s'il l'a déjà choisi. Elle est plutôt de savoir s'il s'agit d'un lieu unique ou plusieurs lieux possibles successivement ou simultanément. L'enjeu semble être que c'est YHWH qui choisit un lieu avant que le peuple y bâtit un autel. Dire que c'est « chez l'une de tes tribus » (Dt 12,14.), sans la préciser davantage, viserait à éloigner les nouveaux arrivants des lieux de sacrifice et de culte des peuples autochtones. Dans ce cas également, la compréhension d'un lieu unique et précis est le fruit d'une relecture ultérieure qui tente de légitimer tel ou tel lieu à une époque donnée.

Si l'on suit la formule « le lieu que YHWH choisira » (TM), rien ne s'oppose à ce que ce lieu change dans l'histoire, puisque YHWH peut choisir des lieux différents à des moments différents. Le choix du lieu et le moment de faire ce choix restent ouverts. Cependant si ce lieu est précis, l'anomalie narrative soulignée ci-dessus reste également entière.

En revanche, si l'on suit la formule « le lieu que YHWH a choisi » (Sam), on est obligé d'apporter une précision en amont de ces versets, sans quoi ils sont incompréhensibles. C'est probablement la raison pour laquelle Sam a senti la nécessité de placer le texte qui commande de bâtir un autel sur le mont Garizim dans le Décalogue (Ex 20 // Dt 5). Les références au Sichem de l'époque des patriarches (Gn 12,6, Gn 33,18-20) n'auraient pas suffi pour défendre l'érection d'un autel sur le mont Garizim. Le dixième commandement samaritain était nécessaire. Rappelons que le dixième commandement samaritain reprend les textes de Dt 11,29a ; 27,2b-3a.4a.5-7 et 11,30⁴. Le lieu où le peuple devra ériger un autel pour YHWH est le mont Garizim (précisé en Dt 27,4 dans

⁴ On cite habituellement Ex 13,11a comme étant la référence de la première phrase, à cause du terme הכנעני « le Cananéen » qu'il contient, mais absent de Dt 11,29. Voir Abraham Tal, « Le Pentateuque Samaritain », in Adrian Schenker, Philippe Hugo (eds.), *L'enfance de la Bible hébraïque. Histoire du textes de l'Ancien Testament*, Le Monde de la Bible 52, Genève : Labor et Fides, 2005, p. 77-104, spéc. p. 88-90. Je pense cependant que cette phrase vient uniquement de Dt 11,29. Elle a été complétée par le nom « du Cananéen » suite à une harmonisation avec le texte de Dt 11,30 qui compose également ce commandement. Le dixième commandement samaritain est donc formé par Dt 11,29-30 et 27,2-7, les seuls textes qui contiennent des prescriptions relatives au Garizim.

la version samaritaine). Placé à cet endroit, le dixième commandement samaritain sert désormais de référence historique au peuple d'Israël et de référence narrative au lecteur. Au moment de lire Dt 12-26 et 31, chacun est au courant du lieu que YHWH a déjà choisi. Dans ces conditions, ce lieu est unique et précis, et sur ce point, l'anomalie narrative est résolue. Le problème est que la reprise et le regroupement de textes de Dt 11 et 27 dans le Décalogue créent une anomalie textuelle. Il s'agit d'un regroupement tardif, non attesté par les témoins textuels anciens, en particulier les témoins pré-samaritains connus⁵.

L'approche narrative fait donc penser que le texte de Dt 12-26 et 31 ne visait pas d'abord un lieu unique et précis que YHWH a choisi ou qu'il choisira pour y mettre son nom, mais tout lieu que YHWH choisirait. Le texte entendait d'abord préserver le peuple d'Israël de l'absorption religieuse au milieu des pratiques païennes.

2. Que sait-on des lieux de culte et quelle était l'intension des auteurs ?

2.1. Les lieux de culte

Peut-on préciser la visée littéraire de Dt 12-26 et 31 à propos des lieux de cultes ? Dans son histoire, Israël a connu plusieurs lieux officiels du culte aussi bien avant qu'après la construction du temple à Jérusalem. À part des lieux comme Dan et Bethel, considérés comme dissidents par rapport à Jérusalem sous Jéroboam

⁵ Voir John M. Allegro, *Qumrân Cave 4 I (4Q158-4Q186)*, DJD 5, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1968, p. 3-4 ; John Strugnell, « Notes en marge du volume V des 'Discoveries in the Judean Desert of Jordan' », *RevQ* 26, 1970, p. 163-276, spéc. 168-175 ; Judith E. Sanderson, *An Exodus Scroll from Qumran. 4QpaleoExod^M and the Samaritan Tradition*, Harvard Semitic Studies 30, Atlanta, Georgia : Scholars Press, 1986, p. 235-237 ; Innocent Himbaza, *Le Décalogue et l'histoire du texte. Études des formes textuelles du Décalogue et leurs implications dans l'histoire du texte de l'Ancien Testament*, OBO 207, Fribourg : Academic Press, Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, p. 63-66.

(1R 12,26-33), d'autres lieux de culte sont bien connus après l'entrée en terre promise. Certains sont mentionnés simultanément sans être considérés comme dissidents⁶. Il s'agit d'Ébal (Jos 8,30-35), Silo (Jos 18,1.8 ; Jg 18,31 ; 1S 1-4), Bokim (Jg 2,5), Miçpa, Béthel, Guilgal et Rama (1S 7 ; Os 12,12 ; Am 4,4), et Gabaon (1R 3,4). Selon TM, le mont Carmel (1R 18) est un lieu *ad hoc* de démonstration, alors que selon la Septante (LXX), le Carmel peut également très bien être considéré comme un lieu permanent de sacrifice⁷. D'autres lieux comme Arad, Beer-Shéva, Éléphantine, Garizim, Léontopolis ou encore Samarie ont été portés à notre connaissance par l'archéologie ou par des textes anciens. Cependant, l'idée de la centralisation du culte et donc de l'exclusivité de Jérusalem est suffisamment ancienne, comme plusieurs textes des *Nebiim* le montrent, même si elle n'était pas partagée par tous à toutes les périodes. Selon Thomas Römer, elle apparaît de manière voilée également dans certains textes du Pentateuque⁸.

⁶ L'expression « vos sanctuaires » en Lv 26,31 fait probablement référence au moins à une partie de cette réalité. Voir Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27*, AB 3B, New York, London, Toronto, Sydney, Auckland : Doubleday, 2001, p. 2320. Même dans le judaïsme rabbinique, certains reconnaissent la légitimité de plusieurs lieux de sacrifices. Voir Talmud Babli, *Megillah* 9b-10a.

⁷ TM montre l'aspect éphémère de l'autel du Carmel en précisant que le feu a tout « dévoré », y compris les pierres de l'autel (1R 18,38). Après la démonstration du prophète Élie, il n'y avait donc plus d'autel. En revanche, la LXX, qui est moins idéologique sur ce point, dit que le feu a seulement « léché » les pierres et la poussière, ce qui laisse l'autel en place et maintient la légitimité de plusieurs autels. Voir Adrian Schenker, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher. Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher*, OBO 199, Fribourg: Éditions universitaires, Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, p. 22-23; Adrian Schenker, « Der Ort, an dem Jhwhs Name wohnt. Eine oder mehrere Stätten? » *HeBAI* 4, 2015, 219-229, spéc. 222-226.

⁸ Thomas Römer observe que les récits concernant Abraham évoquent plusieurs autels à Sichem, Béthel et Mambré-Hébron (Gn 12,7-8 ; 13,4.8), mais que le sacrifice est évoqué uniquement pour le pays de Moriyya, que le rédacteur identifiait probablement déjà à Jérusalem (Gn 22, cf. 2 Chr 3,1). Voir Thomas Römer, « Une seule maison pour le Dieu unique ? La centralisation du culte dans le Deutéronome et dans l'historiographie deutéronomiste », in Camille Focant (ed.), *Quelle maison pour Dieu ?* Lectio Divina, hors-série, Paris : Cerf, 2003, p. 49-80, spéc. p. 66.

Quant au Garizim, l'archéologie montre que la première phase de la construction de son sanctuaire date de la deuxième moitié du 5^e s. av. J.-C.⁹. Même si le contexte historique de l'émergence du Garizim fait l'objet de débats¹⁰, il semble que la communauté du Garizim a émergé dans un contexte de tensions. Néhémie reflète au moins une partie de ceux qui, à Jérusalem, rejetaient les partisans du Garizim. En revanche, au départ la communauté rassemblée autour du Garizim ne revendiquait pas l'exclusivité. Elle se considérait comme faisant partie du même groupe d'adorateurs de YHWH que ceux qui se trouvaient à Jérusalem ou encore à Éléphantine en Égypte¹¹. La lecture exclusiviste en faveur du sanctuaire du Garizim est donc tardive. Elle s'explique mieux à partir du contexte de rejet mutuel entre Juifs et Samaritains au début du 2^e s. av. J.-C. Ben Sira (hébreu) 50,25-26 évoque « la nation folle qui habite à Sichem » en référence aux Samaritains. Dans la même ligne, la Composition narrative et poétique (4Q371 et 4Q372) 1,11-22 évoque également des fous qui habitent le pays de Joseph, alors que celui-ci est dispersé à l'étranger. Ce texte fait également allusion aux Samaritains. Il précise qu'ils font un haut lieu sur une haute montagne, ce qui suppose que le temple du Garizim était encore debout lors de sa rédaction. Le fait que ces fous blasphèment contre Sion (ligne 13), qu'ils soient un peuple hostile (ligne

⁹ Yitzhak Magen, « The Dating of the First Phase of the Samaritan Temple on Mount Gerizim in Light of the Archaeological Evidence », in Oded Lipschits, Gary N. Knoppers, Rainer Albertz (eds.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Fourth Century B.C.E.*, Winona Lake, Indiana : Eisenbrauns, 2007, p. 157-211 ; Yitzhak Magen, *Mount Gerizim Excavations, Volume II : A Temple City*, Jerusalem : Staff Officer of Archaeology – Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria, Israel Antiquities Authority, 2008, p. 167, 175.

¹⁰ Jan Dušek, *Les manuscrits araméens du Wadi Daliyeh et la Samarie vers 450-332 av. J.-C.*, Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 30, Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2007, 546-547, 603-604 ; Erhard S. Gerstenberger, *Israel in the Persian Period. The Fifth and Fourth Centuries B.C.E.*, Biblical Encyclopedia/Biblische Enzyklopädie 8, Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2011, 5-6 ; Etienne Nodet « Sânballaṭ de Samarie », *RB* 122, 2015, p. 304-354 ; Reinhard Pummer, « Was There an Altar or a Temple in the Sacred Precinct on Mt. Garizim? », *JSJ* 47, 2016, 1-21.

¹¹ C'est dans un contexte d'une collaboration encore possible entre Jérusalem et Garizim qu'on comprend mieux les lectures du Deutéronome. Voir Garry N. Knoppers, « The Northern Context of the Law-Code in Deuteronomy, *HeBAI* 4, 2015, p. 162-183.

20), parlent contre les fils de Jacob (ligne 21) et que le rédacteur espère leur destruction (ligne 22), reflète le niveau des tensions qui devaient exister entre les deux communautés¹². La destruction du Garizim par Jean Hircan en 112-111 av. J.-C. en fut la conséquence¹³. Le texte de 2M 5,21-23 ; 6,1-3 montre qu'au début du 2^e s. av. J.-C., Antiochus IV Épiphanes considérait encore Juifs et Samaritains comme une même communauté de foi. Flavius Josèphe signale des querelles entre ceux qui soutenaient Jérusalem et ceux qui soutenaient Garizim, alors qu'ils étaient en Égypte (*Antiquités Juives* XII,10 ; XIII,74-79). Donc les deux centres avaient essaimé à l'étranger. En revanche, la notice de 2M 6,2 et Flavius Josèphe, *Antiquités Juives* XII,253-264 (mémoire des Sidoniens de Sichem) laissent entendre qu'à cette même période les Samaritains ont pris également leurs distances vis à vis de Jérusalem¹⁴. Malgré une situation complexe, puisqu'en même temps Judas Maccabée pouvait se cacher en Samarie (2M 15,1), c'est un tel contexte qui explique les relectures exclusivistes de Dt 12-26 et 31¹⁵.

2.2. Visée littéraire

Si les versets de Dt 12-26 et 31 avaient été composés pour servir la cause de la centralisation du culte à l'époque où le royaume du Nord n'existait déjà plus, ils auraient clairement visé Jérusalem, principal centre du culte au Sud depuis la construction du pre-

¹² Voir Moshe Bernstein, et. al., *Qumran Cave 4. XXVIII Miscellanea*, Part 2, DJD XXVIII, Oxford : Clarendon Press, 2001, p. 171 ; Magnar Kartveit, *The Origin of the Samaritans*, VTS 128, Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2009, p. 160-171.

¹³ Yitzhak Magen, Haggai Misgav, Levana Tsefania, *Mount Gerizim Excavations, Volume I, The Aramaic, Hebrew and Samaritan Inscriptions*, Judaea and Samaria Publications 2, Jerusalem : Staff Officer of Archaeology-Civil Administration of Judea and Samaria, Israel Exploration Authority, 2004, p. 13-14.

¹⁴ Jan Dušek, *Aramaic and Hebrew Inscriptions from Mt. Gerizim and Samaria between Antiochus III and Antiochus IV Epiphanes*, Culture & History of the Ancient Near East 54, Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2012, p. 101-116.

¹⁵ Voir dans ce sens Ingrid Hjelm, « Northern Perspectives in Deuteronomy and its Relation to the Samaritan Pentateuch », *HeBAI* 4, 2015, p. 184-204, spéc. p. 193.

mier temple. On lirait ces chapitres dans le contexte des centralisations du culte comme sous Ézéchias (2R 18,4) et Josias (2R 23) au 7^e siècle av. J.-C. Dans ce cas, la phrase « le lieu que YHWH choisira » serait une figure de style qui évoque Jérusalem sans la nommer, alors que le temple y est déjà construit et donc qu'elle est déjà « choisie » à cette époque¹⁶.

Je pense cependant qu'au moins une partie de ces textes n'a pas été écrite pour servir la cause de la centralisation du culte à Jérusalem. Cette relecture a été faite après coup¹⁷. Un texte comme Dt 12, qui a un caractère composite comme ses répétitions le montrent, combine plusieurs motifs¹⁸. L'idée de la centralisation ne doit pas masquer celle qui me semble être la première, à savoir la lutte contre la confusion des sanctuaires. En effet, sur le plan du rituel religieux, il fallait absolument se séparer des pratiques et des lieux de culte des populations autochtones, la confusion des autels pouvant entraîner celle de YHWH avec les autres divinités locales. Un autre motif est la réglementation des égorgements non rituels en dehors d'un lieu précis¹⁹. Alors que plusieurs versets de Dt 16 semblent effectivement avoir visé la cen-

¹⁶ Voir Magnar Kartveit « The Place That the Lord Your God Will Choose », *HeBAI* 4, 2015, p. 205-218, spéc. p. 208.

¹⁷ Samuel R. Driver, *Deuteronomy. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary*, ICC, Edinburgh : T & T Clark, 1902, p. 136-138 ; Timo Veijola, *Das 5. Buch Mose Deuteronomium*. Kapitel 1,1-16,17, ADT 8,1, Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, p. 264-267. Pour un résumé de la discussion actuelle, voir Udo Rüterswörden, *Deuteronomium*, BKAT V/3,1, Neukirchen-Vluyn : Neukirchner Verlag, 2011, p. 38-49.

¹⁸ Baruch Halpern, « The Centralization Formula in Deuteronomy », VT 31, 1981, p. 20-38 ; Enslem C. Hagedorn, « Placing (A) God : Central Place Theory in Deuteronomy 12 and at Delphi », in John Day (ed.), *Temple and Worship in Biblical Israel* LHB/OT 422, London : T & T Clark International, 2005, p. 188-211 ; Esias E. Meyer, « Leviticus 17, Where P, H, and D meet : Priorities and Presuppositions of Jacob Milgrom and Eckart Otto », in Roy E. Gane, Ada Taggar-Cohen (eds.), *Current Issues in Priestly and Related Literature. The Legacy of Jacob Milgrom and Beyond*, SBL-R 82, Atlanta : SBL Press, 2015, p. 349-367, spéc. p. 354-357.

¹⁹ Voir Siméon Chavel, « The Literary Development of Deuteronomy 12 : Between Religious Ideal and Social Reality », in Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid, Baruch J. Schwartz (eds.), *The Pentateuch. International Perspectives on Current Research*, FAT 78, Tübingen : Mohr Siebeck, 2011, p. 303-326 ; Timo Veijola, *Deuteronomium*, p. 269-270.

tralisation du culte à Jérusalem dès le départ, un passage comme Dt 16,21 laisse penser que l'autel de YHWH dont il est question est un autel local²⁰. Or, cela suppose plusieurs autels possibles, même simultanément. De ce point de vue, le Code deutéronomique contient des textes qui, au départ, avaient des visées différentes et provenant en même temps du Nord comme du Sud²¹. Pour la question du choix du lieu de culte, il faut rappeler que d'autres références anciennes comme Ex 20,24 visaient d'abord tout lieu que YHWH choisirait²². Le choix de YHWH doit de toute façon précéder toute érection d'un quelconque sanctuaire, alors que le lieu lui-même peut changer. On sait que ces lieux ont effectivement changé avec le temps. En revanche, les rédactions tardives ont vraisemblablement visé directement le sanctuaire de Jérusalem²³. Dès lors, la question est de savoir si toutes les occurrences

²⁰ Voir Richard McDonald, « The 'Altar of the Lord Your God' in Deuteronomy 16,21 : Central Altar or Local Altars ? », *JSOT* 37, 2013, p. 453-472.

²¹ Voir Eckart Otto, *Gottes Recht als Menschenrecht. Rechts- und literaturhistorische Studien zum Deuteronomium*, BZABR 2, Wiesbaden : Harrassowitz Verlag, 2002 ; Gordon J. Wenham, « Deuteronomy and the Central Sanctuary », in Duane L. Christensen (ed.), *A Song of Power and the Power of Song. Essays on the Book of Deuteronomy*, Sources for Biblical and Theological Study 3, Winona Lake, Indiana : Eisenbrauns, 1993, p. 94-108 ; Joy Joseph, « Re-Lecturing » of Deuteronomy (Chapter 12-26) in the Post-exilic Period, Berlin : Logos Verlag, 1997, p. 9-20 ; Jack R. Lundbom, *Deuteronomy, A Commentary*, Grand Rapids, Michigan/Cambridge, UK : William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2013, p. 6-20. Spécialement pour Dt 12, voir Thomas Römer, « Cult Centralization in Deuteronomy 12. Between Deuteronomistic History and Pentateuch », in Eckart Otto, Reinhard Achenbach (Hrsg.), *Das Deuteronomium zwischen Pentateuch und deuteronomistischem Geschichtswerk*, FRLANT 206, Göttingen : Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004, p. 168-180. Pour une discussion globale, voir Cynthia Edenburg, Reinhard Müller, « A Northern Provenance for Deuteronomy ? A Critical Review », *HeBAI* 4, 2015, p. 148-161.

²² Voir John Van Seters, « The Altar Law of Ex 20,24-26 in Critical Debate », in Martin Beck, Ulrike Schorn (eds.), *Auf dem Weg zur Endgestalt von Genesis bis II Regum. Festschrift Hans-Christoph Schmitt zum 65. Geburtstag*, BZAW 370, Berlin, New York : de Gruyter, 2006, p. 157-174.

²³ Stefan Schorch évoque un point de vue selon lequel plusieurs lieux ont été choisis avant Jérusalem, mais que leur choix a été abandonné (cf. Ps 78,60-69). Voir Stefan Schorch, « The Samaritan Version of Deuteronomy and the Origin of Deuteronomy », in József Zsengellér (ed.), *Samaria, Samaritans, Samaritans. Studies*

de notre refrain devaient absolument contenir une seule forme verbale renvoyant au passé ou au futur. On peut aller encore plus loin dans cette question en se demandant si toutes les formes verbales au *qatal* devaient se comprendre comme faisant référence au passé.

3. Faut-il lire le lieu que YHWH « a choisi », « choisira » ou « aura choisi » ?

3.1. Dépasser la dichotomie « passé-futur »

Pourquoi faut-il que YHWH ait déjà choisi un lieu pour son nom ou pourquoi faut-il qu'il ne l'ait pas encore choisi ? Les controverses judéo-samaritaines nous ont habitué à lire Dt 12-26 et 31 à la lumière du choix du Garizim au passé, d'une part, et de Jérusalem au futur, d'autre part. Cependant, si on lit ces textes en essayant de faire abstraction de ces controverses et sans tenir compte du dixième commandement samaritain, on n'a pas besoin d'une compréhension dichotomique et exclusive « il a choisi » ou « il choisira ». Une approche philologique permet d'aller plus loin pour déterminer la forme verbale à retenir dans la traduction de l'hébreu. Pour cette discussion, je me limite aux textes non controversés entre Juifs et Samaritains.

À part les témoins textuels mis en évidence ces dernières années, Adrian Schenker évoque Ne 1,9 qui est une citation des formulations du Deutéronome²⁴. Il en conclut que ces formulations devaient contenir une forme verbale à l'accompli (*qatal*) : « il a choisi », comme c'est le cas pour cette citation.

on Bible, History and Linguistics, Studia Judaica 66, Studia Samaritana 6, Berlin/Boston : de Gruyter, 2011, p. 23-37.

²⁴ Adrian Schenker, « Le Seigneur choisira-t-il le lieu de son nom ou l'a-t-il choisi ? L'apport de la Bible grecque ancienne à l'histoire du texte samaritain et massorétique », in Anssi Voitila, Jutta Jokiranta (eds.), *Scripture in Transition. Essays on Septuagint, Hebrew Bible, and Dead Sea Scrolls in Honour of Raija Sollamo*, JSJS 126, Leiden, Boston : Brill, 2008, p. 339-351.

Le passage de Ne 1,9 a l'avantage de reprendre la phrase de Dt 12-26 et 31. Il existe cependant un autre texte qui, sans utiliser la même phrase, laisse entendre que YHWH a fait une place où demeurer ou qu'il a déjà préparé un lieu pour son peuple. Il s'agit d'Ex 15,17. Dans le contexte du livre de l'Exode, ce verset ne peut se comprendre comme une référence exclusive à Jérusalem, même si l'histoire de la rédaction et de la réception n'exclut pas une telle éventualité²⁵. En revanche, les temps de ses verbes intéressent notre discussion.

Ex 15,17

תבאמו ותטעמו בהר נחלתך מכון לשבתך פעלת יהוה מקדש אדני כוננו ידיך

Tu les fais entrer (litt : tu les feras entrer) et tu les plantes (litt : tu les planteras) sur la montagne, ton patrimoine. Tu as préparé, SEIGNEUR, un lieu pour y habiter. Tes mains ont fondé, ô Seigneur, un sanctuaire (TOB).

Sur le plan philologique, l'intérêt de ce texte réside dans les formes verbales utilisées. Il évoque des actions futures que YHWH accomplira, c'est-à-dire « faire entrer » et « planter » son peuple. Elles sont suivies d'autres actions au passé : YHWH « a préparé » ou ses mains « ont fondé ». Les actions de « préparer » et de « fonder » précèdent celles de « faire entrer » et de « planter » le peuple. Or, ces deux premières actions exprimant l'antériorité sont décrites dans une forme *qatal*, et tous les témoins textuels s'accordent sur les temps utilisés. Ce texte laisse donc entendre que YHWH a déjà fait un lieu pour y demeurer et qu'il a déjà préparé un sanctuaire. Le texte d'Ex 15,13-17 résume le parcours de

²⁵ Pour les interprétations controversées de ce verset, voir Frank Michaeli, *Le livre de l'Exode*, CAT II, Neuchâtel : Delachaux & Niestlé, 1974, p. 132-134 ; Cornelis Houtman, *Exodus*, Volume 2 : Chapters 7:14-19:25, HCOT, Campen : Kok Publishing House, 1996, p. 240-248 ; 290-292 ; Bernard Gosse, « La mention du sanctuaire en Exode 15,17 en relation au Psaume 74 et au Psautier », RB 113, 2006, p. 188-200. Kevin Chen voit même le sanctuaire d'Ex 15,17 comme eschatologique. Voir Kevin Chen, *Eschatological Sanctuary in Exodus 15:17 and Related Texts*, Studies in Biblical Literature 154, New York, Washington D.C., Baltimore, Bern, Frankfurt, Berlin, Brussels, Vienna, Oxford : Lang, 2013.

l'exode, si bien que la montagne, le lieu et le sanctuaire se situent visiblement dans la terre promise. On dira donc qu'avec d'autres mots, Ex 15,17 renvoie au même thème que le refrain de Dt 12-26 et 31.

Ex 23,20 utilise également une formulation très proche de Dt 12-26 et 31, avec une action antérieure exprimée dans une forme *qatal*²⁶.

Ex 23,20

הנה אנכי שלח מלאך לפניך לשמרך בדרך ולהביאך אל המקום אשר הכנתי

Je vais envoyer un ange devant toi pour te garder en chemin et te faire entrer dans le lieu que j'ai préparé (TOB).

Dans ce verset, les actions postérieures de « garder » et de « faire entrer » sont exprimées à l'infinitif. En revanche, la formule « le lieu que j'ai préparé », qui se comprend au passé, rappelle le slogan de Dt 12-26 et 31. Cependant, le lieu que YHWH a préparé est ici compris comme le pays et non un lieu particulier pour le sanctuaire.

Il en ressort que ces versets expriment l'antériorité de certaines actions par rapport à d'autres par une forme verbale au *qatal*. Bien que le contexte de ces versets laisse aisément décliner ces verbes au passé, le point suivant montre qu'on ne doit pas se limiter au passé dans l'analyse du *qatal*. La dichotomie passé-futur reflétée dans les discussions sur « le lieu que YHWH a choisi ou choisira » doit être dépassée.

²⁶ Le passage d'Ex 20,24 n'est pas retenu dans cette discussion, puisque la lecture de Smr אוכרתי me semble secondaire. Voir Gary N. Knoppers, Bernard M. Levinson (eds.), *The Pentateuch as Torah. New Models for Understanding Its Promulgation and Acceptance*, Winona Lake, Indiana : Eisenbrauns, 2007, p. 209 ; Emanuel Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible*, Third edition revised and expanded, Minneapolis : Fortress Press, 2012, p. 88.

3.2. La forme verbale *qatal* désignant le futur antérieur dans le Deutéronome

On le voit bien, c'est la forme verbale *qatal* qui est le catalyseur de tout le problème d'interprétation. Les actions exprimées dans cette forme en Ex 15,17 et 23,20 sont tournées vers le passé. YHWH a déjà fait ou préparé un lieu et il a préparé un sanctuaire.

Cela n'est cependant pas le cas de la plupart des versets du Deutéronome, en particulier dans les chapitres 16-31. Plusieurs actions précédant d'autres actions à venir et exprimées dans une forme *qatal* sont connues en Dt 16,17 ; 18,20.22 ; 28,20.33.36.45. 52.53 ; 29,21 ; 30,1.3 ; 31,18. La particularité de ces passages est que les verbes conjugués dans une forme *qatal* sont réellement à comprendre dans un sens futur²⁷. Le rapprochement avec d'autres actions qu'elles précéderont leur donne alors le sens précis d'un futur antérieur²⁸.

1) La phrase *נתן לך יהוה אלהיך אשר* de Dt 16,17, est à comprendre comme « selon la bénédiction que YHWH ton Dieu t'aura donnée ». Nous avons le même verbe en 28,52 qu'il faut comprendre comme « le pays que YHWH t'aura donné » et en 28,53, qu'il faut lire « les fils et les filles que t'aura donnés YHWH ton Dieu ». Le don du pays, de la descendance et des bénédictions n'a pas encore eu lieu alors que le peuple est dans le désert.

2) La phrase *דבר בשמי את אשר לא צויתיו לדבר* de Dt 18,20 est à comprendre comme « une parole en mon nom que je n'aurai pas ordonnée ». C'est également le cas pour Dt 18,22, où la phrase *דברו יהוה אשר לא* est à comprendre comme « la parole que

²⁷ Dans ce sens, voir Udo Rüterswörden, *Deuteronomium*, p. 15.

²⁸ Ce sens est bien attesté dans le système verbal en hébreu. Voir Peter J. Gentry, « The System of the Finite Verb in the Classical Biblical Hebrew », *Hebrew Studies* 39, 1998, p. 7-38, spéc. p. 18-20 ; Ronald J. Williams, *Williams' Hebrew Syntax*, Third edition, Revised and expanded by John C. Beckman, Toronto Buffalo London : University of Toronto Press, 2010, p. 67-68 ; Jan Joosten, *The Verbal System of Biblical Hebrew. A new synthesis elaborated on the basis of classical prose*, Jerusalem Biblical Studies 10, Jerusalem : Simor LTD, 2012, p. 205-212 ; Alexander Andrason, « Future Values of the Qatal and their Conceptual and Diachronic Logic : How to Chain Future Senses of the Qatal to the Core of its Semantic Network », *Hebrew Studies* 54, 2013, p. 7-38.

YHWH ne lui aura pas dite ». Ici, le texte met en garde contre un faux prophète qui n'existe pas encore.

3) Les versets qui mettent en garde contre l'abandon de YHWH par le peuple, comme Dt 28,20 : **אשר עזבתני** et 28,45 : **כי לא שמעת** **בקול יהוה אלהיך**, ne peuvent se comprendre au passé, parce que le peuple n'est pas encore entré en terre promise. Il faut donc les lire au futur antérieur, respectivement comme « que tu m'auras oublié » et « car tu n'auras pas écouté la voix de YHWH ton Dieu ».

4) Les versets de Dt 28,33 et 36 évoquent un peuple ou une nation inconnue d'Israël : **אשר לא ידעת עם** et **אשר לא ידעת אל גוי**. Cette évocation s'inscrit dans le cadre des interventions punitives de YHWH qui doivent se comprendre dans un sens futur, respectivement « un peuple que tu n'auras pas connu » et « vers une nation que tu n'auras pas connue ». En effet, il s'agit d'un risque de dépossession, à l'avenir, d'un pays qu'Israël n'a pas encore hérité à ce stade du récit.

Les passages de Dt 29,21 : **ואת תחלאיה אשר חלה יהוה בה** « et les maladies dont YHWH l'aura frappé » ; Dt 30,1 : **הגוים אשר הדיחך** ; Dt 30,3 : **מכל העמים אשר הפיצך יהוה אלהיך** « les nations au milieu desquelles YHWH ton Dieu t'aura chassé » ainsi que Dt 30,3 : **שמה** « parmi tous les peuples où YHWH ton Dieu t'aura dispersé », sont à comprendre au futur antérieur puisque les interventions punitives de YHWH suite à son abandon par le peuple n'ont pas encore eu lieu.

5) Le passage de Dt 31,18 donne l'explication de l'intervention punitive de YHWH qu'il faut également comprendre au futur antérieur : **על כל הרעה אשר עשה כי פנה אל אלהים אחרים** « à cause de tout le mal qu'il aura fait, parce qu'il se sera tourné vers d'autres dieux ».

Les exemples de versets observés en Dt 16-31 montrent que la forme *qatal* qualifiant une action antérieure à une autre action à venir exprime un futur antérieur, contrairement aux verbes d'Ex 15,17 et 23,20 qui sont tournés vers le passé. Pour dire les choses autrement, Dt 16-31 exprime naturellement le futur antérieur dans une forme verbale *qatal*. Dès lors, la question est de savoir pourquoi dans TM le verbe **בחר** (choisir) fait systématiquement exception lorsqu'il fait référence au lieu d'adoration de YHWH.

3.3. En quoi le verbe בחר (choisir) est-il particulier ?

Plusieurs versets du Deutéronome expriment le futur antérieur dans une forme *qatal*. Il est donc surprenant d'observer qu'en même temps TM donne systématiquement la forme *yiqtol* dans toutes les occurrences où il est question de choisir (בחר) un lieu de la part de YHWH.

TM et Sam peuvent pourtant s'accorder sur leur emploi d'une forme *yiqtol* dans une formulation proche mais qui n'évoque pas le choix de YHWH. C'est le cas en Dt 23,17 où il est question du libre choix de résidence de la part d'un esclave réfugié (במקום יבחר : dans le lieu qu'il choisira). En Dt 30,1 la situation est même inversée pour un verbe différent, puisque Sam utilise une forme *yiqtol* (ידיחך : il te chassera) alors que TM contient un *qatal* (הדיחך, compris hors contexte comme « il t'a chassé »).

Cela montre, d'une part, que pour exprimer le choix de YHWH au sujet d'un pays non encore conquis, ou au sujet d'un lieu particulier dans ce même pays, la forme verbale la plus courante est un *qatal*. Dans les passages du Deutéronome, ce *qatal* est à interpréter comme un futur antérieur. Cela laisse penser, d'autre part, que le fait d'avoir systématiquement une forme *qatal* (Sam) ou *yiqtol* (TM), spécialement pour le choix d'un lieu de la part de YHWH, relève probablement d'une harmonisation idéologique d'un côté comme de l'autre²⁹. Il faut rappeler que cette forme verbale n'est systématique que lorsque le texte évoque le choix d'un lieu pour le nom de YHWH. Il semble donc que l'antériorité exprimée par la forme *qatal* dans les passages concernés de Dt ne vise pas le temps de l'auteur (l'étape présente dans la narration) mais celui de la construction d'un sanctuaire par le peuple ou celui de l'offrande des sacrifices.

Pourtant, les exemples d'Ex 15,17 et 23,20 montrent que la forme *qatal* qui exprime l'antériorité par rapport à une autre ac-

²⁹ Knoppers observe également que les deux expriment une théologie de l'élection sans qu'on puisse affirmer qu'une lecture serait sectaire et pas l'autre. Voir Gary N. Knoppers, *Jews and Samaritans. The Origin and History of their Early Relations*, Oxford : Oxford University Press, 2013, p. 184-188.

tion à venir peut viser le temps de l'auteur et donc être compris comme le passé. Au niveau de l'interprétation des passages de Dt 12-26 et 31, il est donc facile de glisser d'un futur antérieur vers le passé, alors qu'il est pratiquement impossible d'opérer le même glissement vers le futur simple. Les lectures idéologiques du verbe **בחר** (choisir) avaient donc besoin de préciser la forme verbale qui convenait le mieux à leurs positions idéologiques respectives.

Sans une relecture idéologique, l'utilisation du *qatal* dans le sens d'un futur antérieur n'exclut pas que le lieu choisi par YHWH soit le mont Garizim, Jérusalem, ou encore un autre lieu. Au fond, la rigidification tardive des interprétations a superposé plusieurs éléments et occulté certains d'entre eux. En effet, les lectures insistantes juive et samaritaine se sont orientées vers un lieu exclusif : centralisé et déterminé. La formule « a choisi » (Sam) renvoyait explicitement au mont Garizim, à condition de lire auparavant le dixième commandement samaritain. En revanche, la formule « choisira » (TM) renvoyait implicitement à Jérusalem à condition de lire le corpus des *Nebiim*, puisque c'est lui qui évoque le choix explicite de cette ville. Ce faisant, en se limitant aux divergences internes du peuple d'Israël, les deux interprétations ont occulté le regard sur les relations entre Israël et les nations, une fois en terre promise. En effet, plusieurs passages de Dt 12-26 contenant le refrain « le lieu que YHWH aura choisi » s'orientent vers une mise en garde contre la confusion des sanctuaires ou l'adoption des sanctuaires païens. Cette confusion aurait pu glisser vers l'adoration d'autres dieux. Ces passages insistent sur le fait que c'est YHWH qui choisit d'abord un lieu et qu'ensuite le peuple l'y adore, en construisant un autel, en offrant des sacrifices ou encore en rappelant la loi. Sur le plan philologique, un élément occulté par les interprétations juive et samaritaine est que la forme *qatal* du verbe **בחר** (choisir), qui pouvait être décliné au passé ou au futur antérieur selon le cas, a été exclusivement orientée vers le passé³⁰. On a pourtant observé qu'en

³⁰ Concernant la date du changement de **בחר** (il a choisi) en **יבחר** (il choisira), Stefan Schorch évoque le milieu du 2^e s. av. J.-C. entre la rédaction de 4QMMT (4Q394 f8 iv:9-11) qui contient une forme *qatal* et celle du Rouleau du Temple (11Q19 52:9.16 ; 56:5 ; 60:13-14) qui a la forme *yiqtol*. Voir Stefan Schorch, « The Samaritan Version of Deuteronomy and the Origin of Deuteronomy », p. 33-34.

Dt, la même forme verbale pour d'autres verbes peut très bien se décliner au futur antérieur. Il nous fallait donc rappeler ce sens pour rendre le refrain de Dt 12-26 et 31 par « le lieu que YHWH aura choisi ».

Conclusion

Dans ces lignes, j'ai essayé de montrer que les approches narrative, historique et philologique permettent de mieux appréhender la question textuelle et littéraire du lieu que YHWH « a choisi » ou « choisira » pour y mettre son nom.

L'approche narrative montre une situation qui paraît paradoxale au premier abord. On note d'une part l'insistance sur le fait que YHWH doit choisir un lieu avant qu'on y bâtit un autel ou qu'on y offre des sacrifices et, d'autre part, l'absence de la précision sur ce lieu. En réalité, cette situation devient logique si, en partant du temps du narrateur, on comprend que ce lieu n'est pas encore déterminé. L'approche narrative oriente la compréhension de la prescription de YHWH comme une mise en garde contre la confusion des autels. Il faudra éviter de l'adorer n'importe où, et spécialement sur les autels des peuples autochtones, qui adorent d'autres dieux. Par conséquent, le lieu d'adoration de YHWH peut changer. Cette approche montre alors, d'un côté, que la position samaritaine de faire référence à un lieu précis et exclusif déjà choisi est problématique. Le choix du Garizim devait donc être précisé en amont de ces textes, c'est-à-dire dans le Décalogue (Ex 20 // Dt 5). C'est la raison pour laquelle le dixième commandement samaritain est considéré comme une addition secondaire et idéologique. De l'autre côté, la position juive d'insister, plus de vingt fois, sur un même lieu à choisir sans jamais le nommer paraît narrativement étrange. C'est la raison

Cependant à mon sens, la lecture de 4QMMT n'est pas déterminante, puisqu'elle cite explicitement Jérusalem. Dans ce cas, rien n'empêche d'avoir le verbe בחר dans la forme *qatal*, comme le font plusieurs passages des Rois (1R 8,44.48 ; 11,13.32.36 ; 14,21 ; 2R 21,7 ; 23,27). En revanche, la période à partir de la première moitié du 2^e s. av. J.-C. peut être retenue sans trop de précision puisqu'on a les échos d'un rejet mutuel entre Juifs et Samaritains.

pour laquelle lire ces occurrences comme faisant référence à un lieu précis, sous-entendu mais non révélé, relève d'une interprétation idéologique tardive.

L'approche littéraire et historique montre qu'il y a eu beaucoup d'autels et de lieux d'adoration de YHWH en terre promise et qu'ils étaient légitimes. Cependant, bien que la communauté du Garizim semble avoir émergé dans un contexte de tensions, elle ne revendiquait pas l'exclusivité. La centralisation est un élément tardif aussi bien sur le plan littéraire qu'historique. Dans ce contexte, il semble que les versets de Dt 12-26 et 31 au sujet du lieu que YHWH a choisi ou qu'il choisira devraient être traités de manière différenciée. Certains font allusion à un autel local alors que d'autres visent une centralisation du culte à Jérusalem. Cette approche montre donc une sorte d'évolution allant de plusieurs autels légitimes à un seul autel central et exclusif. C'est la raison pour laquelle les positions tranchées aussi bien juive, pour un autel exclusif à choisir, que samaritaine, pour un autel exclusif déjà choisi, résultent des démarches idéologiques.

L'approche philologique pose, d'une part, la question de l'interprétation temporelle qu'il faut assigner au verbe « choisir », qu'il soit dans une forme *qatal* ou *yiqtol* et, d'autre part, celle de la forme la plus plausible entre les deux. Or, le rapprochement avec d'autres textes qui sont dans le même contexte montre que la forme *qatal* du verbe « choisir » renvoie souvent à un futur antérieur, c'est-à-dire à une action qui, dans un futur non défini, précédera une autre. Le sens du verbe « choisir » en Dt 12-26 et 31 est donc « le lieu que YHWH aura choisi ». Cette lecture laisse comprendre que, dans la progression narrative, ce choix n'est pas encore fait, mais qu'il devra précéder toute érection d'un sanctuaire en terre promise. En revanche, le même rapprochement montre que la forme verbale la plus courante pour exprimer le futur antérieur est un *qatal* et non un *yiqtol*. C'est la raison pour laquelle la lecture systématique juive du choix de YHWH dans une forme *yiqtol* est considérée ici comme une correction idéologique et tardive. Cependant, une harmonisation systématique a dû également concerner le côté samaritain, mais dans une moindre mesure. Par ailleurs, cette insistance sur le choix, déjà fait ou à faire, d'un sanctuaire exclusif, a occulté le souci plus ancien

d'éviter la confusion des sanctuaires, notamment le risque d'adopter les divinités des peuples autochtones.

Intentional Omissions in the Textual History of the Books of Kings: In Search of Methodological Criteria

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FLTE / EPHE / UMR 7192

Résumé. Quand des témoins textuels présentent des différences quantitatives, les exégètes, souvent attachés à la règle *lectio brevior potior*, ne courent-ils pas le risque de négliger l'hypothèse d'une omission délibérée de la part d'un copiste ? Tel est bien le cas selon J. Pakkala, qui s'est récemment penché sur de nombreuses situations dans les livres des Rois où l'absence d'un passage s'expliquerait par une censure théologique ou idéologique. Idéalement, l'identification des motivations des scribes devrait permettre de définir des critères méthodologiques conduisant à privilégier dans certains cas l'explication par omission intentionnelle par rapport aux scénarios concurrents (chute accidentelle, expansion du texte). Dans cet article, nous voudrions apporter une contribution à cette recherche en mettant en évidence quatre nouveaux types de motifs, au delà de la censure théologique ou idéologique, ayant pu être à l'origine d'omissions délibérées dans les livres des Rois.

Introduction¹

Long neglected in textual criticism (as well as in compositional criticism), the role of deliberate omissions is now the subject of renewed interest in scholarly discussions regarding the transmission of the Hebrew Bible.² This article investigates four cases of minuses in some textual witnesses of the Books of Kings (ana-

¹ A version of this article was read as an invited paper at the 2015 annual meeting of the European Association of Biblical Studies in Cordoba, in the research group "Editorial Techniques in the Hebrew Bible in Light of Empirical Evidence".

² See especially J. Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted: Omissions in the Transmission of the Hebrew Bible* (FRLANT 251; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2013).

lyzed in this order: 1 Kgs 4:5; 14:26; 15:7; 11:23-24 MT // 11:14 LXX). These case studies may be instructive with regard to two important questions.

First, *according to which criteria can a text critic decide that a minus in a textual witness is due to an intentional omission?* Indeed, alternative explanations often exist. For instance, many quantitative variants may be due to an accidental omission.³ What are we to conclude when a motive can easily be suspected for a deliberate minus, but the same variant can also be explained by haplography? Should we give preference to the explanation of a mechanical error as the most reasonable scenario, on the principle that such mistakes are common, whereas deliberate changes are less documented and that their detection often remains speculative? Obviously, another possible explanation for a quantitative variant is that of an addition which occurred in other textual witnesses. In the Books of Kings, it is all the more difficult to decide since there exist two editions, attested by the two main textual traditions (MT and LXX), and their *relative chronology* remains the subject of an ongoing debate.⁴ Moreover, making a textual

³ According to N. Fernández Marcos, this could explain many variants in the Old Latin of Kings (*Scribes and Translators: Septuagint and Old Latin in the Books of Kings* [VTSup 54; Leiden/New York/Köln: Brill, 1994]).

⁴ See e.g. J. Treballe Barrera, *Salomón y Jeroboán: Historia de la recensión de 1 Reyes 2-12;14* (Bibliotheca Salmanticensis Dissertationes 3; Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 1980); idem, *Jehu y Joas: Textos y composición literaria en 2 Re 9-11* (Valencia: Institución San Jerónimo para la investigación bíblica, 1984); A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14* (CahRB 48; Paris: Gabalda, 2000); idem, *Älteste Textgeschichte der Königsbücher: Die hebräische Vorlage der ursprünglichen Septuaginta als älteste Textform der Königsbücher* (OBO 199; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2004); P. S. F. van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11* (VTSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2005); Ph. Hugo, *Les deux visages d'Élie: Texte massorétique et Septante dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 Rois 17-18* (OBO 217; Fribourg/Göttingen: Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2006); idem, "Le Grec ancien des livres des Règles: Une histoire et un bilan de la recherche", in Y. A. P. Goldman, A. van der Kooij, and R. D. Weis (eds.), *Sôfer Mahîr: Essays in Honour of Adrian Schenker Offered by Editors of Biblia Hebraica Quinta* (VTSup 110; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006), p. 113-141; A. S. Turkanik, *Of Kings and Reigns: A Study of Translation Technique in the Gamma/Gamma Section of 3 Reigns (1 Kings)* (FAT II.30; Tübingen:

decision sometimes involves a literary analysis of the text, not only the application of rules of textual criticism, because some textual differences stem from an editorial reworking of the passage.

Second, what are the main reasons why a copyist or translator would have deliberately omitted a part of the text? With regard to the Books of Kings, J. Pakkala has recently pointed out several instances of shortening due to ideological or theological censorship.⁵ Provided that they are due to intentional omissions, the case studies below may illustrate four possible motives of intentional omissions in the same books: suppressing an unlikely piece of historical information (in 1 Kgs 4:5); eliminating a contradiction within the book (in 1 Kgs 14:26); avoiding a repetition (in 1 Kgs 15:7); suppressing some details in the wake of the transposition of a passage, either because they are difficult to understand or because the re-ordering of the text makes a clause redundant (in 1 Kgs 11:23-25 MT // 11:14 LXX). The two first cases concern isolated omissions (of a word or a sentence) that may be due to the sensitivity of a copyist to the accuracy of the text. The third example will show that, ironically, an omission could sometimes be prompted by an addition, as a sort of compensation. Finally, the fourth case study may illustrate the fact that omissions were sometimes “collateral damage” in large-scale reworking of texts.

Mohr Siebeck, 2008); M. Richelle, *Le testament d'Elisée: Texte massorétique et Septante en 2 R 13,10-14,16* (CahRB 76; Pendé: Gabalda, 2010).

⁵ Pakkala, *God's Word Omitted*, p. 224-48; idem, “Yahweh, The Sun-god, Wants a New Temple: Theological corrections in 1Kgs 8:12-13/3Reg 8:53^a”, in K. De Troyer, T. M. Law, and M. Liljeström (eds.), *In the Footsteps of Sherlock Holmes: Studies in the Biblical Text in Honour of Anneli Aejmelaeus* (Contributions to Biblical Exegesis & Theology 72; Leuven/Paris/Walpole: Peeters, 2014), p. 377-90.

1. A word omitted to avoid an unlikely piece of information (1 Kgs 4:5)

1.1. The textual evidence

The first variant that we consider occurs in the list of Solomon's high officials at the beginning of 1 Kings 4. In the MT, the list contains a surprising item: "and Zabur son of Nathan priest friend of the king" (v. 5). The word "priest" has no equivalent in the LXX.

LXX ^B	LXX ^L	MT
καὶ Ορνεια υἱὸς Ναθαν	καὶ Ορνεια υἱὸς Ναθαν	וְעֶזְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־נָתָן עַל־
ἐπὶ τῶν καθεσταμένων	ἐπὶ τῶν καθεσταμένων	הַנִּצָּבִים
καὶ Ζαβουθ υἱὸς Ναθαν	καὶ Ζακχουρ υἱὸς Ναθαν	וְזַבּוּד בֶּן־נָתָן
		כֹּהֵן
ἐταῖρος τοῦ βασιλέως	ἐταῖρος τοῦ βασιλέως	רֵעֵה הַמֶּלֶךְ

But to whom does it refer in the Hebrew text? The closest word is Nathan. While there is no other mention of a priest called Nathan, David had a son of this name, and according to 2 Sam 8:18 several of his sons were priests. Conceivably the word כֹּהֵן might be written here in order to distinguish this Nathan with the patronym in the first part of the verse. However, in a patronym, one would expect the article: "Nathan *the* priest", like it happens in verse 2: "Azariah the son of Zadok the priest" (וְעֶזְרִיָּהוּ בֶן־יְצֻדֹק הַכֹּהֵן). By contrast, in this list the titles of the officials themselves are not always preceded by articles (see סֹפְרִים in v. 3; כֹּהֲנִים in v. 4). Therefore, it is more likely that the word כֹּהֵן refers to Zabur. He would be listed here for two qualities mentioned in apposition: "priest" and "friend of the king" (whatever the latter designation means).

1.2. The textual evolution

The word בִּהֵן does not seem to be a gloss,⁶ because there is no reason why somebody would have inserted it:⁷ there is no other priest named Zabur, so a copyist would not have been influenced by this kind of preceding information. However, the same reason may explain why somebody would have been puzzled by the word בִּהֵן and deleted it, or not translated it. Additionally, a copyist aware of the Greek tradition may have made the connection with “Zachour son of Nathan, the counselor” (Ζαχουρ υἱὸς Ναθαν ὁ σύμβουλος) mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:26h. Indeed, in the LXX¹, the name mentioned in 1 Kgs 4:5 is Ζακχουρ. If so, the mention of the same man as a counselor and as a priest would have appeared to be contradictory. Admittedly, some scholars regard it as possible that a priest would have served as a counsellor to the king,⁸ but the point is that this could have been *perceived* as contradictory by a copyist. This would have prompted the suppression of the word בִּהֵן.

1.3. Remarks

It is interesting to compare this problem with the enigma of the mention of David’s sons as priests (בִּהֲנִים) in 2 Sam 8:18 according to the MT (as well as the Vulgate and Aquila). In most versions, they are regarded as high officials: “chiefs of the court” (αὐλάρχαι) in the LXX (B and L), “princes in the house of the king” in the OL (*in principes... domus regis*), “great men” in the Peshitta (*rwrbyn*) and the Targum (*rbrbyn*). Likewise, the Chronicler says that they were “next to the king” (1 Chr 18:17: וּבְנֵי־דָוִד הָרֵאשִׁימִים לְיָד הַמֶּלֶךְ). Some scholars think that these readings stem from an otherwise unattested meaning of בִּהֵן and this is reflected

⁶ This word is regarded as original by M. J. Mulder, *I Kings*, vol. 1: *1 Kings 1-11* (HCOT; Leuven: Peeters, 1998), p. 166. *Contra* J. Gray, who deletes the work (*I & II Kings* [OTL; London: SCM, 1977³], p. 131).

⁷ R. Kittel, *Die Bücher der Könige* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), p. 31.

⁸ E.g. Mulder, *I Kings*, p. 166.

in some modern translations (e.g. “principal officer” in the KJV, “chief ministers” in the JPS [1917], “royal advisors” in the NIV). This explanation may be valid in the Aramaic linguistic area, but in Hebrew it is a purely conjectural, *ad hoc* solution⁹, although of course not impossible. Wenham posits instead a textual corruption from the word *sknym* “administrators (of the royal estates)” (cf. *sknym* in Ugaritic).¹⁰ As McCarter notes, “it is difficult, however, to think of the surprising designation of David’s sons as priests as having arisen by corruption from an uncontroversial text”.¹¹ Therefore, many scholars think that the text originally mentioned David’s sons as priests,¹² then was revised by translators in order to avoid the notion that they were illegitimate,¹³ or “to avoid the implication that there could have been legitimate non-levitical priests”.¹⁴

If so, the versions of 2 Sam 8:18 confirm that calling a priest somebody who was illegitimate for this office was cause for changing a text. In addition, the two cases under scrutiny exemplify two different strategies to deal with a difficulty caused by a single word: changing it (2 Sam 8:18) or deleting it (1 Kgs 4:5). In the latter passage, it was possible to suppress it because there were two titles in apposition, so the absence of the word left a complete sentence. And yet, it would have been easy to drop the final clause in 2 Sam 8:18. Does it mean that the first reflex of a tradent was not to omit an entire clause altogether if it was possible to “save” it? Admittedly, we do not know how the copyist or translator reasoned here. Maybe, like some modern scholars, he told himself that there existed a rare lexical meaning to the word

⁹ For the Semitic attestations of KHN, see D. Cohen, *Dictionnaire des racines sémitiques ou attestées dans les langues sémitiques*, fasc. 10, Leuven, Peeters, 2012, p. 1186.

¹⁰ G. J. Wenham, “Were David’s Sons Priests?”, *ZAW* 87 (1975), p. 79-82.

¹¹ P. Kyle McCarter, *II Samuel* (AB; New York: Doubleday, 1984), p. 254-55 for a summary of the evidence, and p. 255 for the quotation.

¹² W. Nowack, *Richter-Ruth* (HKAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1900), p. 184-85; H. J. Stoebe, *Das zweite Buch Samuelis* (KAT VIII.2; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1994), p. 254, 258-59.

¹³ A. Caquot and P. de Robert, *Les livres de Samuel* (CAT 6; Geneva: Labor et Fides, 1994), p. 448-49.

¹⁴ A. A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC 11; Dallas: Word, 1989), p. 137.

כִּהְיֶה. It is even conceivable that he believed that it was a gloss that needed to be suppressed.

2. A verse possibly omitted to avoid a contradiction in Kings (1 Kgs 14:26)

2.1. The textual evidence

According to all the textual witnesses, Pharaoh Shishak took all the treasures of the Temple and of the palace, in particular some shields of gold (1 Kgs 14:26). The MT adds that the latter were made by Solomon in a short relative clause at the end of the verse. In the Septuagint (LXX^B and LXX^L), the narrative contains a longer plus, according to which Shishak also took “the golden spears that David took from the hand of the servants of Hadraazar, king of Souba, and brought them into Ierousalem”. All these traditions come together in the *Antiquity of the Jews* (Ant VIII: 258-59), as shown in the table below.

LXX ^B	LXX ^L [v. 40]	MT	Ant VIII: 258-59
And (Susac) took all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house	And (Susac) took all the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house	And (Shishak) took the treasures of the house of the Lord and the treasures of the king’s house;	He plundered the Temple and he emptied the treasures of God and of the king (...)
<i>and the golden spears that David took from the hand of the servants of Hadraazar, king of Souba, and brought them into Ie-</i>	<i>and the golden spears that David took from the hand of the servants of Hadraazar, king of Souba, and brought them into Ie-</i>		He even took the shields of gold, long and round, that King Solomon had made;
<i>rousaleam;</i>	<i>rousaleam;</i>		
he took all	he took every-	he took every-	
	thing;	thing;	

the shields of gold.	and the shields of gold	and he took all the shields of gold	
	that Solomon had made.	that Solomon had made.	
			He did not ne- glect the gold quivers that David had dedi- cated to God after taking them from the king of Soba.

The Septuagint plus in 1 Kgs 14:26 echoes another one in the Greek version of 2 Sam 8:7 (see the table below). According to the biblical account, David took gold shields to Hadadezer's servants. The LXX (B and L) and the Old Latin add that Shishak "took them when he went up in Jerusalem in the days of Roboam son of Solomon", which is a prolepsis to the plus of 1 Kgs 14:26 LXX. Again, this prolepsis appears in Josephus's narrative (*Ant* VII:104-105). In addition, in 2 Sam 8:7, the LXX^L contains a further plus: David took to Hadadezer not only the gold shields but also "all the shields of gold and the spears".

2 Sam 8: 7 LXX ^B	LXX ^L	4QSam ^a	MT
David took the gold shields that they made upon the servants of Hadadezer king of Souba,	David took the gold shields that were upon the servants of Hadadezer king of Souba, <i>and all the shields of gold and the spears,</i>	David took the gold shields that were upon the servants of Hadadezer,	David took the gold shields that were upon the servants of Hadadezer,
and brought them to Jerusa- lem.	and brought them to Jerusa- lem.	and brought them to Jerusa- lem.	and brought them to Jerusa- lem.
<i>And Susac king of</i>	<i>And Susac king of</i>	<i>And Susac king of</i>	

<i>Egypt took them</i>	<i>Egypt took them</i>	<i>Egypt took them</i>
<i>when he went up to</i>	<i>when he went up to</i>	<i>later when he went</i>
<i>Jerusalem in the</i>	<i>Jerusalem in the</i>	<i>up to Jerusalem in</i>
<i>days of Roboam son</i>	<i>days of Roboam son</i>	<i>the days of Roboam</i>
<i>of Solomon.</i>	<i>of Solomon.</i>	<i>son of Solomon.</i>

Arguably both main plusses were already present in a Hebrew *Vorlage*: in it clear in the case of 2 Sam 8:7 because of the testimony of 4QSam^a, while in the case of 1 Kgs 14:26 it is easy to make a retroversion:

ואת שלטי הזהב אשר לקח דוד מיד עבדי הדדעזר מלך צובה ויביאם ירושלימה

This hypothesis is all the more probable if one accepts E. Nodet's suggestion that Josephus used a Hebrew manuscript of Kings that "has some contacts with the source of the Antiochian (Lucianic) recension" and "never used any known Greek translation of the Bible for 1-2 Kings",¹⁵ but this is a debated subject.

2.2. The textual evolution

Regarding the evolution of the text, two scenarios are conceivable.

1. *Additions*. A redactor could have added these two passages, hence its presence in the *Vorlage* of the LXX and 4QSam^a.¹⁶ Alter-

¹⁵ E. Nodet, "The Text of 1-2 Kings Used by Josephus", in B. Halpern and A. Lemaire (eds.), *The Books of Kings: Sources, Composition, Historiography and Reception* (VTSup 129; Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2010), p. 41. According to a more traditional approach, Josephus used a LXX tradition close to the Antiochian Text. Nodet states that Josephus "never used any known Greek translation of the Bible for 1-2 Kings" (p. 41). Another possibility is that Josephus used several manuscripts, some in Hebrew and others in Greek (J. Koulagna, *Salomon, de l'histoire deutéronomiste à Flavius Josèphe: Problèmes textuels* [Paris: Publibook, 2009], p. 141-48).

¹⁶ C. F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings with an Introduction and an Appendix* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903), p. 194; see also J.A. Montgomery and H.S. Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings* (ICC; Edinburg: T & T Clark, 1951), p. 273.

natively, the plus in 1 Kgs 14:26 may have been added first, then it would have prompted the later insertion of a prolepsis in 2 Sam 8:7. Note in passing that in this hypothesis, the insertion of this tradition in 1 Kgs 14:26 would have been accompanied by the suppression of the last clause of the verse (“that Solomon had made”). This scenario is possible, but it seems difficult to explain where the redactor who inserted this information could have obtained it. It could be a midrashic development, but it really seems to be a short, fairly uninteresting addition, the motive behind which remains difficult to discern. According to Kittel, the aim of the redactor would have been to lessen Roboam’s humiliation,¹⁷ but this explanation seems to me unsatisfactory.

2. *Omissions.* The Septuagint plusses were part of the textual archetype and omitted by the MT. It is also possible that only the clause in 1 Kgs 14:26 was present in the earliest text, and that only this clause was concerned by the omission; the clause in 2 Sam 8:7 would be a late gloss that was never part of the MT. In turn, the omission in 1 Kgs 14:26 can be explained in two ways:

a. *An accidental dropping.* A scribe may have dropped the clause by *homoioarcton*, due to the repetition of וַאֲחַת in Hebrew. (This explanation does not work regarding 2 Sam 8:7.) This is possible but not very likely since the repeated word (here, וַאֲחַת) is very short.

b. *An intentional omission.* The MT omitted a part of 2 Sam 8:7 and 1 Kgs 14:26 *because the information conveyed by these clauses seemed to contradict another text.*¹⁸ Indeed, according to 2 Kgs 11:10, the shields of gold were still in Jerusalem at the time of Athalia (“The priest delivered to the captains the spears and shields that had been King David’s, which were in the house of the LORD”). To make sure that no reader would believe that 1 Kgs 14:26 was about David’s arms, the scribe added a clause: “that Solomon had made” (cf. 1 Kgs 10:16-17). In a word, Schenker notes, the MT is more

¹⁷ Kittel, *Die Bücher der Könige*, p. 122.

¹⁸ A similar explanation has already been suggested in the case of a minus in Josh 20:3-6. See R. Müller, J. Pakkala and B. ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing: Growth and Change of Texts in the Hebrew Bible* (Atlanta: SBL, 2014), p. 45-58: according to their analysis, Josh 20:4-5 has been omitted because it contradicted Num 35:25-28.

logical than LXX because it reflects a reworking of an initially confused text.¹⁹ This clause would have entered other Hebrew manuscripts (hence its presence in LXX^L and in Ant VIII:259) by secondary assimilation.

Actually the original meaning of the text may be a little more complicated, because the words used for the different objects (shields, quivers...) differ according on the passage and the textual witness (see the table below). This would merit a detailed examination, but the point for the present discussion is that a scribe may easily have thought that there was a contradiction.

2 Sam 8:7		1 Kgs 14:26		2 Kgs 11:10	
MT	LXX	MT	LXX	MT	LXX
וְהָיָה	B: χλιδων	וְהָיָה	δορυ	וְהָיָה	B:
	L: χλιδων,		όπλον		σειρομαστης,
	όπλον,				τρισσος
	δορυ				L: δορυ,
					φαρετρα

Several scholars already have faced a similar situation and favored the explanation by intentional omission over against the explanation by haplography, because a coincidence is unlikely in the case where a clear theological or ideological motive can be detected.²⁰ It seems to me that this approach should be considered in the present case too, especially because the possible *homioarcton* is based on a tiny repetition, and because the motive for an omission is strong.²¹

¹⁹ A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14*, p. 126-28.

²⁰ Pakkala, *God's Omitted Word*, p. 238 ; A. Schenker, « The Septuagint in the Text History of 1-2 Kings », in B. Halpern et A. Lemaire (eds.), *The Books of Kings*, p. 3-17.

²¹ For a similar situation, see R. Müller, J. Pakkala and B. ter Haar Romeny, *Evidence of Editing*, p. 74-76: a minus in 1 Sam 10:1 MT has sometimes been explained by haplography, but this is not entirely convincing from a technical point of view, whereas an intentional omission may have occurred because a scribe regarded the text as contradictory with another passage.

2.3. Remarks

If indeed a scribe deliberately omitted the corresponding clauses in the two passages, then it means two things. First, he regarded 2 Kgs 11:10 as conveying more reliable information than the two other passages (but we do not know why). Second, he did not want to leave a historical inaccuracy, or a contradiction, in the text. Does this tell us something of the authority of the text in his mind? This is possible, but more evidence would be necessary to substantiate this notion.

3. A clause omitted to avoid a repetition (1 Kgs 15:7)

3.1. An addition (v. 6)

In the notice concerning Abiyam's reign (1 Kgs 15:1-8), the MT contains a plus: "and there was war between Rehoboam and Jeroboam all his days" (ומלחמה היתה ביך-רחבעם ובין ירבעם כל-ימי חייו). This sentence seems out of place insofar as it does not concern Abiyam at all. Note that from a grammatical point of view, it is not possible to translate: "The war begun between Rehoboam and Jeroboam continued all the days of his life" as in the NRSV²². In addition, the sentence already appears in all the witnesses in 14:30.

Admittedly, a case could be made that the verse was present in the archetype:

1. It could have originally mentioned Abiyam instead of Rehoboam, as in some Masoretic manuscripts, then been modified (Abiyam > Rehoboam) under the influence of 14:30.

2. It could have been dropped accidentally by *homoioteleuton* in the LXX or its *Vorlage* due to the repetition of "all his days" in v. 5

²² Rightly criticized by M. Cogan, *I Kings* (AB; New York: 2000), p. 393; see also Barthélemy, p. 367, quoting the same understanding by Yéfet ben Ely.

and in v. 6²³, or deliberately since a translator or a copyist would have had good reasons to regard it as an addition inspired by 14:30 (if it mentioned Rehoboam) or by 15:7 (if it mentioned Abiyam).

However, even in this scenario, such a verse mentioning a war between Abiyam and Jeroboam in 15:6 would have been patently redundant with the end of the next verse; it is thus improbable that both sentences are primitive. The verses 14:29-31 and 15:23-24 suggest that the most likely place for such a historical statement is between the allusion to the royal annals and the mention of the burial place, that is, in 15:7. Moreover, the end of v. 7 is attested in all witnesses (except the Peshitta, see below), which is not the case for v. 6. In sum, v. 6 is most probably an addition, a clumsy repetition of 14:30, probably a gloss. Rehoboam could have been changed into Abiyam in some Masoretic manuscripts in order to make sense of this verse in its context, especially in light of the end of v. 7.

3.2. An omission (v. 7)

What is of interest for our present concern is that ironically, *this addition has prompted an omission further on in the text*. Indeed, the Syriac version has the same addition as the MT in 15:6 but in a slightly different form: “and there was war between Abiyam son of Rehoboam (ܐܒܝܝܡ ܒܢ ܪܚܒܘܡ) and Jeroboam all his days”. As we have seen, the same change occurs in some Masoretic manuscripts. This may be due to polygenesis (several scribes independently reacting in the same way in front of the same difficulty); we do not know if the Syriac translator was responsible himself for the change or if he used an already modified Hebrew text. In any case, this modification creates a doublet with v. 7b, which is now almost identical to v. 6 but the mention of Abiyam’s patronym, and the Syriac version omits v. 7b altogether, most probably

²³ So D. Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l’Ancien Testament*, vol. 1 (OBO 50/1; Fribourg/Göttingen: Editions universitaires/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982), p. 367; S. J. DeVries, *1 Kings* (WBC 12; Waco: Word Books, 1985), p. 186.

because of the redundancy. In other words, the translator took on the gloss in v. 6 but dismissed a similar, original verse a little further. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the scribe or translator reacted here as a text or redaction critic, thinking that it was most improbable that the author of this passage had used the same sentence twice in such a short space.

4. Clauses omitted in the wake of a transposition (1 Kgs 11:23-25 MT // 11:14 LXX)

4.1. The textual evidence

The story of Solomon's enemies in 1 Kgs 11:14-25 provides a case where a short passage has been transposed and several minor changes have arguably accompanied this process. In the MT, two notices concerning Solomon's enemies are separated by a flashback, so the outline of the text is:

1. Introduction of Hadad, an enemy to Solomon (v. 14)
2. Flashback: Hadad in David's time (v. 15-22)
3. Introduction of Rezon, an enemy to Solomon (v. 23-24)

In the Septuagint, the introductions of Hadad and Rezon are put together at the beginning of the passage [the verses are numerated after the NETS]:

1. Introduction of Solomon's enemies, Hadad [Hader] and Rezon (v. 14)
2. Flashback: Hadad in David's time (v. 15-24)
3. Final notice concerning Hadad (v. 23-24)

MT

¹⁴ Then the Lord raised up an adversary against Solomon, Hadad the Edomite;

LXX

¹⁴ And the Lord raised up a satan against Salomon, Hader the Idumean

	<p>^(11.23) <i>and Hesrom son of Eeliadae, who was in Raemmath, Hadrazar, king of Souba, his master, ^(11.24) and men were gathered around him, and he was leader of a band, and he first captured Damasek, ^(11.25) And they were [LXX^L: he was] a satan to Israel all the days of Salomon.</i></p>
<p>he was of the royal house in Edom.</p>	<p>And Hader the Idumean was of the seed of the kingdom of Idumea.</p>
<p>[¹⁵⁻²² Flashback: Hadad in David's time]</p>	<p>[Flashback: Hadad in David's time]</p>
<p>²³ God raised up an adversary against him,</p>	
<p><i>Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. ²⁴ He gathered followers around him and became leader of a marauding band, after David slaughtered them; they went to Damascus, settled there, and made him king in Damascus.</i></p>	
<p>²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.</p>	
<p>And [here is] the evil that Hadad did : he despised Israel and reigned over Aram.</p>	<p>²⁵ This was the evil that Hader did, and he was indignant with Israel, and he reigned in the land of Edom.</p>

The tables below highlights minor textual differences in v. 23b-24, notably four minuses in the LXX. Note that two variants are probably due to a misreading:

- in v. 23 בָּרַח מֵאֶת has been read as a single word, perhaps with a confusion between ה and ה, hence ἐν Ραεμμαθ;
- in v. 24, וילכו ("they went") has been read וילכדו ("he seized").

MT	LXX
<p>²³ God raised up an adversary against Solomon, Rezon son of Eliada, who <u>had fled from</u></p>	<p>And Hesrom son of Eeliadae Who <u>was in Raemmath,</u></p>

his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah.

²⁴ He gathered followers around him
and became leader of a marauding
band,

when David slaughtered them;

they went to Damascus,

settled there,

and made him king in Damascus.

Hadrazar, king of Souba, his master,

and men were gathered around him,

and he was leader of a band,

and he first captured Damasek.

MT	LXX
²³ תִּקְרָם אֱלֹהִים לוֹ שָׁטָן	¹⁴
אֶת־רִזּוֹן בְּוֹאֲלֵי־דָע	καὶ τὸν Εσρωμ υἱὸν Ελιαδαε
אֲשֶׁר בָּרַח מֵאֶת	τὸν ἐν Ραεμμαθ
הַדַּדְעֶזֶר מֶלֶךְ־צוֹבָה אֲדִנְיוֹ:	Αδραζαρ βασιλέα Σουβα κύριον αὐτοῦ
²⁴ וַיִּקְבֹּץ עָלָיו אֲנָשִׁים	καὶ συνηθροίσθησαν ἐπ' αὐτὸν ἄνδρες
וַיְהִי שֶׁר־גָּדוֹד	καὶ ἦν ἄρχων συστρέμματος
בְּהַרְגוֹ דָּוִד אֹתָם	
וַיֵּלְכוּ דְמָשֶׁק	καὶ προκατελάβετο τὴν Δαμασεκ
וַיָּשְׁבוּ בָהּ	
וַיַּמְלִכוּ בְּדָמָשֶׁק:	

4.2. The textual evolution

According to Schenker, the main difference between the MT and the LXX is that “Hadad becomes king of Edom in LXX, king of Aram in MT”.²⁴ The MT results from a reworking of the passage; the (*Vorlage* of the) LXX reflects an earlier literary edition.²⁵ Schenker thinks that a motive behind the reworking of the text is that the mention of Hadad as king of Edom (v. 25) in the LXX’s *Vorlage* seems to contradict 2 Kgs 8:20-22. The latter passage states that Edom revolted against Israel during Joram’s reign,

²⁴ A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l’histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14*, p. 113 (my translation).

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

apparently for the first time since David. In Schenker's view, although it is tempting to think that the graphic confusion Edom/Aram occurred in 1 Kgs 11, especially in view of Hadad's name which would perfectly fit an Aramaean, it should be noted that his flight begins in Madian (v. 18), which better fits Edomite origins, and that Hadad comes back to *his* country (v. 21). Accordingly, the earliest redaction of v. 25 probably stated that Hadad was king of Edom not Aram.²⁶ The redactor behind the MT would have changed Edom into Aram in order to remove the contradiction with 2 Kgs 8. Schenker writes that this change "cannot be accidental, since the name Aram is so unexpected after the preceding narrative, 11:15-22, that such an error, had it been purely material, would have immediately been corrected."²⁷ This last argument seems difficult to accept, however, in view of the presence of uncorrected confusions between Edom and Aram in other texts, and because textual assimilations from a chapter to another do happen, but not systematically. From a historical point of view, A. Lemaire has defended the view that 1 Kgs 11 originally concerned only Aram,²⁸ although this hypothesis is not accepted by everybody and many commentators believe, like Schenker, that v. 25 originally mentioned Edom.²⁹

²⁶ The syntax of 1 Kgs 11:25 MT is difficult. Some scholars understand the clause *וְאֵת הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר הָדָד* as if *וְאֵת* meant "beside", hence the usual translation "And he was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon, beside the mischief that Hadad did: and he abhorred Israel, and reigned over Syria." (KJV, JPS, see also NRS, NIV). Yet this is doubtful and the text is probably corrupted (GKC, §118m³). We should perhaps correct it after the LXX: *זֶה הָרָעָה אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה הָדָד* (so BDB, p. 84). Hence the translation: "And he [Rezon] was an adversary to Israel all the days of Solomon. And here is the mischief that Hadad did: he abhorred Israel, and he reigned over Aram." Cf. the French translation: "Rezôn fut un adversaire pour Israël pendant toute la vie de Salomon. Le mal que fit Hadad: il détesta Israël, et il régna sur Aram" (TOB).

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113-14 (my translation).

²⁸ A. Lemaire, "Les premiers rois araméens dans la tradition biblique", in P. M. M. Daviau, J. W. Wevers and M. Weigl (eds.), *The World of the Aramaeans*, vol. 1: *Biblical Studies in Honour of Paul-Eugène Dion* (JSOTSup 324; Sheffield; Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), p. 130-4.

²⁹ E.g. Cogan, *I Kings*, p. 331.

More to the point, the reason that Schenker suggests for the transposition seems debatable: the MT would have separated the notices about Rezon and about Hadad because they were enemies; Solomon was attacked by Hadad, who, in turn, was attacked by Rezon. Schenker considers that the beginning of v. 23 means God raised up an adversary against Hadad, not against Solomon as most scholars understand.³⁰ This is an astute remark, but would really the narrator be concerned here by a divine intervention in the internal affairs of the Aramaeans? What is topical in this passage is the fact that God raises adversaries against Solomon; the possible quarrels between these adversaries seem beyond the point. Besides, in Schenker's textual scenario, the transposition should have been prompted by some feature in the *earliest* text, that is Hebrew model of the LXX in his view, and yet nothing in the Greek text indicates that Hadad and Rezon were enemies. In addition, Schenker does not provide any explanation for the small textual differences in v. 23-24.

Van Keulen defends the opposite scenario: "All evidence implies that MT (including the minuses over against the LXX) presents a more original order than the LXX, even if it does not represent the original narratives of Hadad and Rezon."³¹ This short narrative concerning Rezon seem to abruptly interrupt the account about Hadad, and this could be the motive behind its relocation in v. 14 in the *Vorlage* of the LXX, as Van Keulen notes.³² Cogan also notes that the location of the episode in the LXX is

³⁰ A. Schenker, *Septante et texte massorétique dans l'histoire la plus ancienne du texte de 1 R 2-14*, p. 112-3.

³¹ P. S. F. van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Salomon Narrative: An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11* (VTSup 104; Leiden: Brill, 2005), p. 237.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 234. Montgomery notes that the LXX "transferred" v. 23-25 "in abbreviated form" to the end of v. 14, and he writes: "was this passage omitted in the earliest form of LXX, and then subsequently introduced gloss-wise in parallelism with the other them of 'an adversary'?" (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Kings*, p. 237). Stade thinks that the place of the episode in the LXX cannot be original and prefers its location in the MT, although he believes that v. 25b has been displaced in MT from the end of v. 22 (B. Stade and F. Schwally, *The Books of Kings. Critical Edition of the Hebrew Text with Notes* [Leipzig, Hinrichs, 1904], p. 124).

“hardly original”; he thinks that “the similarity of the opening phrase, ‘YHWH/God raised up an adversary’ may be behind this dislocation”.³³ Such a scribal confusion seems less likely than a deliberate transposition as that envisaged by Van Keulen. Besides, I note that the MT seems to preserve a *Wiederaufnahme* in v. 23a and 25a, since the latter echoes the former:

²³ God raised up an adversary against him,
Rezon son of Eliada, who had fled from his master, King Hadadezer of Zobah. ²⁴ *He gathered followers around him and became leader of a marauding band, after David slaughtered them; they went to Damascus, settled there, and made him king in Damascus.*

²⁵ He was an adversary of Israel all the days of Solomon.

Therefore, the MT might preserve the trace of the earliest insertion of the notice concerning Rezon; this trace would have been lost in the LXX during the transposition. Other possible instances where a textual witness may preserve a *Wiederaufnahme* whereas another witness has lost it in the wake of a transposition have already been noted in Kings³⁴.

Admittedly, it could be argued that a *Wiederaufnahme* occurs in the LXX in v. 14, because the expression “Hadad the Idumean” is repeated before and after the Rezon notice:

¹⁴ And the Lord raised up a satan against Salomon,
Hader the Idumean ^(11.23)
and Hesrom son of Eeliadae, who was in Raemmath, Hadrazar, king of Souba, his master, ^(11.24) and men were gathered around him, and he was leader of a band, and he first captured Damasek, ^(11.25) And they were [LXX^L: he was] a satan to Israel all the days of Salomon.
And Hader the Idumean was of the seed of the kingdom of Idumea.

³³ Cogan, *I Kings*, p. 332.

³⁴ M. Richelle, “Revisiting 2 Kings 13.14-21 (MT and LXX): The Transposition of a Pericope and Multiple Literary Editions in 2 Kings”, in I. Himbaza (ed.), *Making the Biblical Text: Textual Studies in the Hebrew and the Greek Bible* (OBO 275; Fribourg/Göttingen, Academic Press/Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2015), p. 62-81, esp. 73.

But as Van Keulen observes, this is the transposition that caused the copyist to add a minor plus “and Hadad the Idumean” in v. 14b, as a summary repetition necessary to the flow of the text. By contrast, there was no need to repeat that Rezon was an adversary of Solomon in v. 25a, since this does not at all prepare readers for the next sentence, which only concerns Hadad. This is why the repetition of v. 23a and v. 25a can be regarded as a “real” *Wiederaufnahme*, indicating an insertion, whereas the summary repetition of v. 14 is simply a literary necessity.

In the hypothesis that the MT globally reflects an earlier stage than the *Vorlage* of the LXX in this passage, the four minor minus-es in v. 23-24 LXX may receive an explanation:³⁵

— The clause וַיִּקֶם אֱלֹהִים לוֹ שָׁטָן at the very beginning of v. 23 was deleted since it became redundant with the beginning of v. 14 when the transposition occurred.

— The clause בְּהִרְגוֹ דָּוִד אֹתָם (“when David slaughtered them”) is not very clear in the MT. To whom does the suffix refer? From a grammatical point of view, the most natural antecedent is the men gathered in a band according to the beginning of the verse, but this does not make sense in the context. This could have prompted a copyist to take the transposition as an opportunity to remove this clause.³⁶ (The real antecedent is probably “Zobah”, regarded as a collective; this could be an analepsis to 2 Sam 8:3-12, according to which David struck the Zobaites. The narrative thus explains how Hadad was still able to be an enemy to Israel in Solomon’s time: admittedly, David killed many soldiers, but Hadad recruited other men.)³⁷

— The clauses וַיִּמְלְכוּ בְּדַמְשֶׁק and וַיָּשְׁבוּ בָּהּ may have been omitted in the LXX because they were difficult to understand in their context. First, the plural clause וַיִּמְלְכוּ בְּדַמְשֶׁק is very surprising

³⁵ Space prevents me from discussing the differences between MT and LXX in the narrative about Hadad’s flight in Egypt; see Van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative*, p. 235-37; in his opinion, their analysis confirms the notion that a copist behind the LXX or its *Vorlage* made changes in order to clarify the text.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 231.

³⁷ This shows that the argument here is reversible: the clause may be regarded as a gloss added to clarify the text.

(“they reigned in Damascus”, as if all the men in the band were kings); in fact it is perhaps to be corrected to a *hifil* (וַיַּמְלִכֻהוּ), “they made him king”), which would fit the fact that Hadad is not explicitly named as the subject in the next sentence. Secondly, the plural in the two clauses is surprising after the singular προκατελάβετο in the LXX or וַיִּלְכְּדוּ in its *Vorlage*.³⁸

4.3. Remarks

Here we have encountered an example of a general difficulty in the textual criticism of Kings. In contrast with the Book of Jeremiah, the most striking differences between the Hebrew and the Greek texts do not lie mainly in many plusses scattered through one edition of the book; rather, the *same* material often appears in different places. For instance, most of the material found in the miscellanies in the LXX (e.g. 3 Kgdms 2.35a-o, 46a-l) also appears in the MT, albeit scattered in several passages of 1 Kgs 1-11; 14. However, scholars are divided with regard to the relative chronology of the editions of Kings. This makes the detection of omissions difficult, since some of them are linked to the transpositions.

If indeed the MT (globally) reflects an earlier textual stage in 1 Kgs 11:14-25, then we find in this case two kinds of omissions:

- the omission of v. 23aα (“God raised up an adversary against Solomon”) is due to the fact that the transposition made them redundant with v. 14a;

- small omissions in the rest of v. 23-24, made in the wake of the transposition, as if the redactor took this opportunity to remove details which were difficult to understand.

Conclusions

The aim of this article was to present several cases that illustrate both methodological difficulties in the search of intentional omissions.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

sions in the transmission of the books of Kings, and several possible motives behind such changes. If our analysis of these variants is correct, the following conclusions can be proposed:

1. Causes for intentional omissions include not only ideological and theological censorship, but also the reluctance to leave in the text (a) unlikely information, (b) contradictions, or (c) simply repetitions. The cases (a) and (b) may tell us something about the hermeneutics of some copyists (e.g. the authority they acknowledged for the book of Kings) at some point during the transmission of the text, but a lot more evidence would be necessary to substantiate this notion. Moreover, it is very difficult, if not impossible, to decide whether intentional omissions due to this kind of reason and scattered in the Books of Kings are to be ascribed to the same copyist, so we cannot add up this kind of evidence. The case (c) may tell us something of the stylistic or literary sensitivities of the copyist, but the same remarks as above apply.

2. Some minuses can equally be explained by haplography or by intentional omission. From a methodological point of view, it could be argued that the explanation by accidental error is the simplest and most prudent one. But this approach should probably be reconsidered, especially when the basis for the haplography is tiny (e.g. an *homoioleuton* due to the repetition of small elements), or when a strong motive for removing the clause under scrutiny can be identified. It is noteworthy that J. Vroom, in a recent article inspired by a cognitive approach, states that haplography occurs neither with the repetition of individual letters, nor with long passages. In the latter case, where a sizable portion of text (e.g. an entire paragraph) is absent from a textual witness, Vroom suggests that “the possibility of an intentional omission should be considered, rather than haplography”.³⁹

Incidentally, the default preference for the explanation by accidental omission may explain why intentional omissions are not well documented by text critics, and, in turn, less favored as an explanation. Like the rule *lectio brevior potior*, this may have

³⁹ J. Vroom, “A Cognitive Approach to Copying Errors: Haplography and Textual Transmission of the Hebrew Bible”, *JSOT* 40 (2016), p. 259–79, esp. 278.

caused scholars to underestimate the role of omissions in the transmission of the Hebrew Bible.

3. Intentional omissions sometimes occurred in the wake of the reworking of a text, especially the transposition of a passage. The analysis here may be complicated in the context of a debate regarding the relative chronology of the two editions of Kings. In that case, at least two categories of omissions could occur: (a) the deleting of clauses rendered redundant by their new place after the relocation, and (b) “opportunistic” omissions of difficult clauses. In the process, a *Wiederaufnahme* can disappear, and thus also the trace of the insertion of a passage. Maybe this could provide, in some cases at least, a criterion to detect an omission: the textual witness preserving the *Wiederaufnahme* has a good chance of reflecting an earlier stage of the text.

Solomon's Fall and the Law

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Résumé. La transmission légale qui marque la chute de Salomon n'est pas identifiée au moyen d'une loi du livre du Deutéronome. Bien plutôt, 1 Rois 11,2 est une interprétation de Josué 23,12 ou fait référence à une loi aujourd'hui perdue sous-jacente à Josué 23,12 et à 1 Rois 11,2. De plus, 1 Rois 9,25-11,8 ne se fonde pas sur les prescriptions du roi contenues dans la loi du roi (Deutéronome 17,16-17).

Solomon was wise and he was the builder of the temple, yet he was dramatically struck by the wrath of God. 1 Kgs 11:9 states: **וַיִּתְאַף יְהוָה בְּשִׁלְמֹה** (« YHWH became angry with/because of Solomon »). This usage of **אַף** in the Hithpael only occurs in Deut 1:37; 4:21; 9:8, 21; 1 Kgs 11:9; 2 Kgs 17:18. Deut 9:8, 21 show that the verb denotes a form of wrath that can lead to destruction (**להשמיד**). In 2 Kgs 17:18, this divine wrath even led to the downfall of the Northern Kingdom. The verb thus makes clear that Solomon had not just committed a trivial offense. God's wrath was kindled by the fact that (1.) Solomon had turned his heart away from God (**יִשְׁרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה לְבָבוֹ מֵעַם יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל** – the phrase **יִשְׁרָאֵל אֱלֹהֵי יְהוָה + לבב + נטה** only otherwise occurs in Josh 24:23) and (2.) he had done this despite the fact that God had appeared to him twice¹ to admonish or warn him (v. 9b; cf. 1 Kgs 3:4-15; 9:1-9).² V. 10 summarizes the imperative content of the divine

¹ 1 Kgs 6:11-13 is a later addition: « Depuis longtemps les exégètes ont vu dans ce texte un ajout postérieur. » (Jean-Louis Ska, « Les Vertus de la Méthode historico-critique », *Nouvelle revue théologique* 131, 2009, p. 705-727, p. 720 fn. 28); see e.g. Charles F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903, p. 68-70.

² Often v. 10 is read as an allusion to 1 Kgs 9:6 (cf. e.g. Pekka Särkiö, *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie. Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3-5 und 9-11*, Schriften der Finnischen

visitations for Solomon:³ לְלִבִּי לֹא אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים (« to not go after other gods » — a phrase that often appears in Deuteronomy: cf. Deut 6: 4; 8: 19; 11: 28 etc.).⁴ In 1 Kgs 11: 10 God accuses Solomon of keeping neither his covenant (ברית) nor his statutes (חקות).⁵ Solomon had transgressed the law of God.

Exegetischen Gesellschaft 60, Helsinki and Göttingen, Finnish Exegetical Society and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, p. 216; Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, *Josua und Salomo. Eine Studie zu Autorität und Legitimität des Nachfolgers im Alten Testament*, VT.S 58, Leiden et al., Brill, 1995, p. 346; Baruch Halpern, *The first Historians. The Hebrew Bible and History*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press 1996, p. 156; Martin J. Mulder, *1 Kings. Volume 1: 1 Kings 1-11*, HCOT, Leuven, Peeters, 1998, p. 559). In 1 Kgs 9: 6 all Israel (including the king) is called not to follow other gods, not to serve them and not to prostrate before them. But different from 1 Kgs 11,10 the command not to follow other gods is formulated without אחרי and in direct connection with עבד - see further footnote 4.

³ The beginning of v. 10 (וצוה) connects directly to the content of God's appearances. The formulation על הדבר הזה is, according to König §399f, a « betonende Anticipation ».

⁴ In 1 Kgs 9: 4, Solomon is called – like David – to walk (הלך) before God with a pure heart (לב) and to do according to what God has commanded him (צוה): to keep the statutes and ordinances (חקי ומשפטי תשמר; cf. 1 Kgs 3: 14; cf. also 1 Kgs 8: 58). So 1 Kgs 9: 4 shares with 1 Kgs 11: 2, 3, 4, 9 the concept of integrity (לב) and walking before God (הלך). Further, God gives a command in 1 Kgs 9: 4 which is remembered in 1 Kgs 11: 10 (צוה). God commands to keep the statutes and ordinances (שמר – 1 Kgs 9: 4) and in 1 Kgs 11: 10 it is stated that Solomon did not observe (שמר) what God has commanded. So it is reasonable to conclude that 1 Kgs 11: 10 is alluding to 1 Kgs 9: 4 (and also 1 Kgs 3: 14). This also explains why the text refers to the fact that God appeared twice to Solomon (1 Kgs 11: 9).

⁵ In the wording היתה זאת עמך the point of reference for זאת is disputed. According to Gary N. Knoppers it refers to the « syncretistic practices » that are listed in 1 Kgs 11: 1-10 (see Gary Knoppers, *Two Nations under God. The Deuteronomistic History of Solomon and the dual Monarchies, Volume 1: The Reign of Solomon and the Rise of Jeroboam*, Atlanta, Georgia Scholars Press, 1993, p. 151). Comparable formulations can be found in Job 10: 13 (כי זאת עמד) and 1 Kgs 8: 17 (יהי עם לבב) (יהי עם לבב דוד; see also v. 18). In Job 10: 13 אלה and זאת refer to vv.14-17. In v. 13b Job points to the decision, respectively to the judgement, that God seems to have rendered against him. In 1 Kgs 8: 17 the formulation יהי עם לבב דוד expresses that for David the temple building was a heartfelt wish. Taking Job 10: 13 and 1 Kgs 8: 17 into consideration, 1 Kgs 11: 11a needs to be read as accusation that Solomon's breach of law – זאת refers to v. 10 – happened of his own free will (cf. Martin Noth, *Könige. 1. Teilband*, BK IX/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1968, p. 250). The statement that Solomon acted knowingly against God's will is bracketed with צוה (vv. 10-11a).

However, scholars do not agree on which law it was that Solomon transgressed. The divine speech in 1 Kgs 11: 10 points to the prohibition against going after other gods that occurs frequently in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 6: 4; 8: 19; 11: 28 etc.). Prior to this, in 1 Kgs 11: 2, reference is made to a specific prohibition that Solomon had transgressed. Yet it is hard to identify a source within the Hebrew Bible that could have been cited, even though there is a consensus in the commentaries on the books of Kings that 1 Kgs 11: 2 is a citation of Deut 7: 4.⁶ Another popular scholarly opinion is that 1 Kgs 9: 26-11: 8 as a whole presupposes the law of the king in Deut 17: 14-20, against which Solomon has transgressed.⁷ This raises the question of the basis of Solomon's judgement: why was he condemned? The answer to this question appears in 1 Kgs 11: 1-8. One must first analyse this section of the text (see below « Solomon's Fall ») before being able to clarify the relationship between the law cited in 1 Kgs 11: 2 and Deut 7: 4 (see below « Which law is cited in v. 2a? ») as well as being able to ask the question of whether the condemnation of Solomon presupposes the law of the king in Deut 17: 14-20 (see below « Solomon and the Law of the King »).

Solomon's Fall

In 1 Kgs 11: 9 the narrative explanation for God's wrath has become the introduction to a divine speech, stated with the phrase לבב + נטה: Solomon has turned his heart away from God. The divine law cited just beforehand in 1 Kgs 11: 2 warned against just this sin: it is forbidden to mix with certain specifically named nations because doing so leads to the worship of their gods (אֶכֶל יִטוּ אֶת־לִבְבָכֶם אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם – 1 Kgs 11: 2aβ). Solomon's devo-

⁶ Cf. e.g. Mordechai Cogan, *I Kings*, AnchB 10, New York, Doubleday, 2001, p. 326; Simon De Vries, Simon, *I Kings*, WBC 12, Waco, Thomas Nelson, ²1985, p. 286; et. al.

⁷ Cf. e.g. Marc. Z. Brettler, « The Structure of 1 Kings 1-11 », *JSOT* 49, 1991, p. 87-97, p. 93; J. Daniel Hays, « Has the Narrator come to praise Solomon or to bury him? Narrative Subtlety in 1 Kings 1-11 », *JSOT* 28, 2003, p. 149-174, p. 156f; et. al.

tion to other gods (נטה + לבב + אחר) is reported by the narrator in 1 Kgs 11: 4a (וַיְהִי לַעֲתָה זְקֵנָה שְׁלֹמֹה נָשִׂי הָטוּ אֶת־לִבָּבוֹ אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהִים) – cf. also v. 3b). 1 Kgs 11 thus contains a clear threefold development: God warned Israel in the past about this sin; Solomon succumbs to the sin; as a result, Solomon is condemned (in each case נטה + לבב in vv. 2, 3, 4, 9).

Diachronic Perspective on 1 Kgs 11: 2

Mark A. O'Brien, Pekka Särkio and W. Boyd Barrick read v. 2a as a secondary insertion.⁸ Mark O'Brien, for example, states: « Within these verses [1 Kgs 11: 1-2 – TMS] the 'quotation' from Deut 7: 3-4 in v. 2a is a later addition inserted between the list of foreign women in v. 1 and *ba hem* in v. 2b, which obviously refers to them. »⁹ Pekka Särkio generally assumes that the earlier literary layer had not made clear that the women were foreign. He eliminates the adjective נכריות, which in his opinion was « awkwardly » inserted into the text.¹⁰ For this reason, W. Boyd Barrick thinks it is clear that in « the earliest version of Solomon's seduction the

⁸ See Mark O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis. A Reassessment*, OBO 92, Fribourg and Göttingen, Éditions universitaires de Fribourg and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989, p. 161; Pekka Särkiö (1994), *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie. Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3-5 und 9-11*, Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 60, Helsinki and Göttingen, Finnish Exegetical Society and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, p. 214; W. Boyd Barrick, « Loving too well: The negative Portrayal of Solomon », *Estudios Biblicos* 59, 2001, p. 419-449, p. 432.

⁹ Cf. Mark O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis. A Reassessment*, OBO 92, Fribourg and Göttingen, Éditions universitaires de Fribourg and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989, p. 161.

¹⁰ Cf. Pekka Särkiö (1994), *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie. Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3-5 und 9-11*, Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 60, Helsinki and Göttingen, Finnish Exegetical Society and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, p. 214; cf. also W. Boyd Barrick, « Loving too well: The negative Portrayal of Solomon », *Estudios Biblicos* 59, 2001, p. 419-449, p. 432.

issue is the number of seductresses, consistent with Deut 17: 17a's admonition. »¹¹

The following arguments can be found for v. 2a being a secondary insertion: 1.) The position of the adjective נכריות in v. 1a directly after another adjective seems odd. 2.) V. 2b repeats the content of v. 1a (if בהם is referring to Solomon's wives and concubines). This could be read as a kind of scribal « Ringkomposition », that was used to insert v. 2 (and maybe נכריות in v. 1a and the list of nations in v. 1b). 3.) V. 3 judges the number of Solomon's wives and concubines, while v. 1b-2a judge their foreignness.¹² However, these literary-critical arguments cannot be sustained upon closer analysis. Ad 1.) Two adjectives in sequence without a joining waw is not syntactically unusual (cf. e.g. Gen 41: 35). Ad 2.) Grammatically speaking, the statement concerning Solomon in v. 2b links back to v. 2a by means of the phrase בהם referring to the other nations (מן הגוים) or to their gods (אלהיהם). But scholars disagree on the referent of בהם. Mark O'Brien believes that the third person masculine plural pronominal suffix refers to the women.¹³ But this referent is not grammatically possible on the level of the final form of the text and can only be entertained as a possibility if one

¹¹ W. Boyd Barrick, « Loving too well: The negative Portrayal of Solomon », *Estudios Biblicos* 59, 2001, p. 419-449, p. 436.

¹² LXX differentiates in 1 Kgdms 11: 1 between Solomon having a multitude of wives (καὶ ὁ βασιλεὺς Σαλωμων ἦν φιλογύναιος καὶ ἦσαν αὐτῷ ἄρχουσαι ἑπτακόσιοι καὶ παλλακαὶ τριακόσιοι) and marrying foreign women (καὶ ἔλαβεν γυναῖκας ἄλλοτρίας καὶ τὴν θυγατέρα Φαραω Μωαβίτιδας Ἀμμωνίτιδας Σύρας καὶ Ἰδουμαίας Χετταίας καὶ Ἀμορραίας). Percy Van Keulen and Jobst Böseneker have convincingly demonstrated that 1 Kgs 11: 1-8 is older than 3 Kgdms 11: 1-8, or rather that 3 Kgdms 11: 1-8 is a re-organized version of 1 Kgs 11: 1-8 (see Percy Van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative. An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11*, VT.S. 104, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2005, p. 203-221; Jobst Böseneker, *Text und Redaktion. Untersuchungen zum hebräischen und griechischen Text von 1 Kön 1-11*, 1999 [unpublished doctoral thesis], p. 232-234).

¹³ See Mark O'Brien, *The Deuteronomistic History Hypothesis. A Reassessment*, OBO 92, Fribourg and Göttingen, Éditions universitaires de Fribourg and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1989, p. 161; also: Martin Noth, *Könige. 1. Teilband*, BK IX/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1968, p. 241; Mordechai Cogan, *I Kings*, AnchB 10, New York, Doubleday, 2001, p. 326.

judges v. 2a to be a secondary insertion.¹⁴ Martin J. Mulder refers the statement in v. 2b to the love that Solomon had for his foreign wives.¹⁵ He justifies this reading by pointing out the particular use of the word **אהבה** in v. 2b, which generates a link with v. 1a. He argues that the word is an infinitive, one which frequently appears in Deuteronomy (cf. Deut 10: 12, 15; 11: 13 etc. as well as in Josh 22: 3; 23: 12). However, in these passages the object is indicated by the accusative rather than the preposition **ב**. As such, **לאהבה** is adverbial, defining the manner with which Solomon clung to the other nations or to their gods (« by loving »). In the passage that is closest to 1 Kgs 11: 2, namely Josh 23: 12 (see below), **דבק** refers to the nations: it is forbidden to attach oneself to the nations.¹⁶ Ad 3.) Following the logic of the text, Solomon only has foreign wives.¹⁷ Already v. 1a just speaks about foreign women that Salomon loved, and Solomon's successor to the throne, Rehoboam, was born by an Ammonite woman, Naamah (see 1 Kgs 14: 21). The foreignness of Solomon's wives and concubines and the quoted law are integral parts of the narrative and not a secondary insertion.

¹⁴ See also v. 8.

¹⁵ Martin J. Mulder, *1 Kings. Volume 1: 1 Kings 1-11*, HCOT, Leuven, Peeters, 1998, p. 551.

¹⁶ It is also possible that **בהם** refers to the foreign gods (cf. Christina Duncker, *Der andere Salomo. Eine synchrone Untersuchung zur Ironie in der Salomo-Komposition 1 Könige 1-11*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang Verlag, 2010, p. 321); **דבק** is often used as a terminus for loyalty to God (see Deut 10: 20; 11: 22; 13: 5; 30: 20; Josh 22: 5; 23: 8).

¹⁷ Cf. Percy Van Keulen, *Two Versions of the Solomon Narrative. An Inquiry into the Relationship between MT 1 Kgs. 2-11 and LXX 3 Reg. 2-11*, VT.S. 104, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2005, p. 209.

Synchronic Perspective on 1 Kgs 11: 1-8¹⁸

The beginning of 1 Kgs 11 reports Solomon's numerous wives (v. 1). This comment appears to be a continuation of the earlier description of Solomon's wealth (1 Kgs 10: 14-29). The mention of the daughter of Pharaoh as well as, for example, the Hittite women, fit harmoniously with the trade relations with Egypt and the Hittite and Aramean kings mentioned in 1 Kgs 10: 29.¹⁹ However, the object of the love is ambiguous: « many foreign women » (נשים נכריות רבות). The debate concerning foreign women is particularly prominent in Ezra 10 (cf. vv. 10, 11, 14, 17, 18, 44). The issue is also treated in Neh 13: 26f., which consciously refers back to 1 Kgs

¹⁸ Translation: ¹ King Solomon loved many foreign women in addition to the daughter of Pharaoh – Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, Hittites – ² from the nations of which YHWH had said to the Israelites: « You shall not join with them and they shall not join with you, certainly they will turn your hearts after their gods. » Solomon clung to these [the foreign gods] by loving. ³ He had 700 primary wives and 300 concubines, and his women inclined his heart. ⁴ And it happened, when Solomon was old, that his wives had inclined his heart to follow other gods, and his heart was not entirely with YHWH, his God, as the heart of David his father [had been]. ⁵ Solomon followed Astarte, the goddess of the Sidonians, and Milcom, the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁶ Solomon did what was evil in the eyes of YHWH, and did not wholly follow the LORD, as David his father [had done]. ⁷ Then Solomon built a high place to Chemosh, the abomination of Moab on the mountain opposite Jerusalem, and to Molech, the abomination of the Ammonites. ⁸ And so he did for all his foreign wives who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods.

¹⁹ Cf. Christa Schäfer-Lichtenberger, *Josua und Salomo. Eine Studie zu Autorität und Legitimität des Nachfolgers im Alten Testament*, VTS 58, Leiden et al., Brill, 1995, p. 342. In 1 Kgs 11: 1 the verb אהב establishes an intertextual contrast to 1 Kgs 3: 3; instead of loving God, Solomon loves his wives (cf. Gina Hens-Piazza, *1-2 Kings*, Abingdon Old Testament Commentaries, Nashville, Abingdon Press, 2006, p. 108). Solomon loves God (1 Kgs 3: 3), and the Queen of Saba praises God as the one who is loving Solomon and who makes him and his reign prosper. In 1 Kgs 5: 15 the term אהב is used to define Hiram as a loyal ally of David. Whether the contrast between 1 Kgs 11: 1 and 1 Kgs 3: 3 is an intended one is an open question, as the verb אהב is the normal expression for love between a man and a woman, and the sole fact that Solomon loved his wives does not contradict his love to God.

11:1. However, the descriptive phrase «foreign woman» (נשים נכריות / אשה נכרית) does not appear in the legal corpora.²⁰

V. 1 makes a syntactical distinction between the foreign women and Pharaoh's daughter.²¹ Dominique Barthélemy is correct when he claims that this is not a gloss but rather a use of וַאֲת that is analogous to 1 Kgs 11: 25 and which should be translated as «en supplément de».²² Of particular significance for the understanding of the law contained in v. 2 is the enumeration of the nations from which the wives of Solomon originated (v. 1). It is striking that all of the nations mentioned in v. 1 play a role in the other narratives involving Solomon. Rehoboam's mother is an Ammonite (1 Kgs 14: 21); God raises up Haddad as an adversary against Solomon, and he comes from Edom (1 Kgs 11: 14); Hiram, Solomon's supplier of building material and covenant partner, rules as king of the Sidonians (1 Kgs 5: 15, 20 – cf. 1 Kgs 16: 31); King Solomon has trade relations with the King of the Hittites (1 Kgs 10: 29 – cf. also the claim that the Hittites who lived within the state territory of Israel were drafted as slaves: 1 Kgs 9: 20). Only the Moabite women do not appear to be anchored in the story of Solomon. It is possible that they are mentioned in order to allude to Deut 23: 4, which decrees that Moabites and Ammonites must be excluded from the community of Israel. This could also explain the fact that both groups of women are listed together in 1 Kgs 11: 1. The links connecting this catalogue of women with the

²⁰ See also Prov 6: 24; 7: 5 (אשה זרה מנכר).

²¹ Often the statement about pharaoh's daughter is understood as a gloss (cf. Martin Noth, *Könige. 1. Teilband*, BK IX/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1968, p. 247).

²² Dominique Barthélemy, *Critique textuelle de l'Ancien Testament. 1 Josué, Judges, Ruth, Samuel, Rois, Chroniques, Esdras, Néhémie, Esther*, OBO 50/1, Fribourg, Editions Universitaires, 1982, p. 362; O. Saydon proposes to read וַאֲת as an introduction to a series of coordinated accusatives (see Paul P. Saydon, «Meanings and Uses of the Particle וַאֲת», VT 14, 1964, p. 192–210, p. 207). But it is important to note, that the marriage with pharaoh's daughter is picked up in the following verses: «Note that, in contrast to all of the other women, it is nowhere stated that Solomon built an Egyptian shrine for Pharaoh's daughter in Jerusalem.» (Mordechai Cogan, *I Kings*, AnchB 10, New York, Doubleday, 2001, p. 326). The text does not deal with this marriage, because marrying an Egyptian woman is not against the law according to v. 2 (see also Deut 28: 7f.).

broader literary context suggest that the list was consciously composed in light of Solomon's international relations.²³ Furthermore, these links can be traced all the way back to the portrayal of David. David waged wars against Moab (2 Sam 8: 2), Ammon (2 Sam 10: 1-9; 12: 26-31), and Edom (2 Sam 8: 13-14) and he subjugated all of them. Hiram, the king of the Sidonians, was his subordinate (2 Sam 5: 11-12).²⁴ And although the Hittites as a nation did not play a role during David's lifetime, Uriah was a prominent Hittite who played a central role during one of David's lowest moments, which is also closely associated with Solomon (2 Sam 11-12). The law in v. 2, which is cited as an earlier word of God to Israel, alludes to these nations (מִן הַגּוֹיִּים) who are so closely tied to the narrative of David and Solomon. The prohibition is as follows: לֹא-תִבְּאוּ בָהֶם וְהֵם לֹא-יָבֹאוּ בָכֶם.

For Gary N. Knoppers, the expression בּוֹא + ב refers to sexual intercourse, which is here prohibited.²⁵ He reads the expression in parallel to בּוֹא + אֶל־עַל. However, this meaning cannot be presupposed either in Josh 23: 7, 12 nor in 1 Kgs 11: 2. What is being prohibited is the inclusion of another people into the people of Israel as well as the absorption of Israel into another nation. This meaning can be seen in Deut 23: 2-9, which prohibits the inclusion of those who are maimed, of mixed race, and Ammonites and Moabites into the assembly of God (in each case using בּוֹא + בּוֹא + לֹא). As in Josh 23: 7, 1 Kgs 11: 2 also points out that mixing with other nations can lead to the worship of their gods. In 1 Kgs 11: 2 the subject of יָצָאוּ and אֱלֹהֵיהֶם is the nations (הַגּוֹיִּים). The citation ends in v. 2a with a warning against turning away to the gods of other nations.

²³ It is also interesting to note that 1 Kgs 11: 2 is not parallel to the list of the subordinated people that is given in 1 Kgs 9: 20. This is another argument against Deut 7: 3-4 being the law mentioned in 1 Kgs 11: 2.

²⁴ Cf. Marvin Sweeney, *I & II Kings. A Commentary*, Old Testament Library, Louisville and London, Westminster John Knox Press, 2007, p. 155.

²⁵ See Gary N. Knoppers, « Solomon's Fall and Deuteronomy », in *The Age of Solomon. Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, edited by L. K. Handy, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 11, Leiden, Brill, 1997, p. 392-410, p. 399.

V. 3a abruptly provides information concerning the number of Solomon's wives and concubines. For many exegetes this line seems unfitting. For W. Boyd Barrick, the distinction in the final form of the text between נשים, which in his opinion has been glossed with שרות, and פלגשים is misleading: « If the seductresses are meant to be specifically his wives, however, mention of other women in v. 3a needlessly confuses the issue. »²⁶ However, 2 Sam 20: 3 demonstrates that the term פלגש refers to a wife who has the status of a concubine (cf. אלמנות in 2 Sam 20: 3). As such, נשים שרות seems to refer to the primary wives, with both being subsumed under the general term נשים in vv. 1-8. The rest of v. 3 shows that all the women were foreigners, for they are the ones who turned Solomon's heart away (v. 3b²⁷).²⁸ This is then portrayed in v. 4 in narrative form. Vv. 3b-4 unfold the sin of Solomon in terms of the logic of the commandment in v. 2: the myriad of women seduced Solomon (literally: « inclined his heart [to them] »). It is this that leads to Solomon's inclination towards other gods.

V. 4 dates Solomon's apostasy from God and his pursuit of other gods to the period of his old age. The expression עת זקנה refers to the period of physical decline in old age (cf. Ps 71: 9; cf. also 1 Kgs 1: 1). It is tempting to take this statement as an apology for

²⁶ W. Boyd Barrick, « Loving too well: The negative Portrayal of Solomon », *Estudios Biblicos* 59, 2001, p. 419-449, p. 432.

²⁷ According to v. 3b the women inveigled Solomon's heart, respectively his mind (cf. נטה in Isa 44: 20; Job 36: 18; Prov 7: 21; cf. also סור in Deut 17: 17).

²⁸ It is not unusual that a masculine finite verb form is followed by a feminine noun (cf. Charles F. Burney, *Notes on the Hebrew Text of the Books of Kings*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903, p. 156). P. Särkiö supposes that v. 3b and v. 4 belong to different layers: « Über die (ausländischen) Frauen Salomos wird in V. 3b gesagt, daß sie das Herz Salomos (von Jahwe) abwandten (נטה Hi.). Der folgende Vers 4 definiert und wiederholt diese Angabe in V. 3b, weshalb V. 3b und V. 4 wahrscheinlich nicht von dem selben Redaktor stammen. » (Pekka Särkiö, *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie. Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3-5 und 9-11*, Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 60, Helsinki and Göttingen, Finnish Exegetical Society and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, p. 214) – and v. 3b is missing in LXX. But v. 3b and v. 4 are not a unnecessary doublet (see Immanuel Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Könige*, KHCAT IX, Freiburg et. al., Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1899, p. 77).

Solomon's sin,²⁹ but this comment in v. 4 does not make a distinction between an era in which Solomon was « good » and the era in which he was « sinful ». His relationships with the foreign women are not dated.³⁰ Solomon's sin must therefore be conceptualized as consisting of two phases. The first phase is during his rule when he married foreign women, which in itself is already a transgression of the commandment of God. Yet it was only when he reached old age, which is the second phase, that he began to worship the gods of his foreign wives. His cultic transgression, which took place at an advanced age, resulted from an undated previous transgression against the law of God. It is no doubt the concern of v. 4 to make clear that Solomon's apostasy took place after he had built the temple.³¹

V. 4b pronounces the first verdict against Solomon. Whereas in vv. 3-4a Solomon was the object of the claims being made, here a claim is being made about his moral state, and this explains his condemnable actions. Whereas v. 3b does not indicate to what the women turned Solomon's heart, v. 4 provides this information in two ways. According to v. 4a, Solomon's heart turned towards other gods (אחר). Verse 4b then logically concludes that Solomon's heart was not complete (שלם) with/before (עם) God.³² Solomon's sinful behaviour in v. 5, which consists in following other gods, is a consequence of his general attitude, as described in

²⁹ Immanuel Benzinger, *Die Bücher der Könige*, KHCAT IX, Freiburg et. al., Verlag von J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1899, p. 77; Pekka Särkiö, *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie. Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3-5 und 9-11*, Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 60, Helsinki and Göttingen, Finnish Exegetical Society and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, p. 214.

³⁰ John Gray, *I & II Kings* (Old Testament Library), London, SCM Press, ²1970, p. 271.

³¹ Hermann Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit*, FRLANT 129, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982, p. 193.

³² 1 Kgs 8: 61; see also 1 Kgs 15: 3,14; 2 Kgs 20: 3; he does not devote himself completely to God. Solomon (שלמה) is not fully dedicated to God (לא היה לבנו (שלם)). This play on words (שלם and שלמה) directs the reader back to 1 Kgs 3: 12. Further Solomon is contrasted with the ideal of David, who did not follow other gods and who, even when he sinned, returned to God (see 2 Sam 12; 24: 10). 1 Kgs 11 does not say whether Solomon repented of his sins.

v. 4b.³³ Deuteronomy is the book that primarily warns against doing such a thing (הלך + אחרי; cf. especially Deut 6: 14; 8: 19; 11: 28; 13: 3; 28: 14).

אז in v. 7 links back to the temporal clause in v. 4 in order to separate the following description of Solomon's construction of cultic high places from his construction of the temple.³⁴ The construction of the temple, which brackets the narrative from 2 Sam 7 to 1 Kgs 8 (or the narrative from Deut 12 to 1 Kgs 8), is followed by the construction of the high places, which brackets the portrayal of the Judahite kings from Solomon to Josiah (cf. 2 Kgs 23: 12); the implication is that Solomon's erection of the high places led (among other things) to the division of the two kingdoms (cf. vv. 9-13). Josiah then destroys the high places after the downfall of the Northern Kingdom. The two texts are evidently closely connected with each other: in the books of Kings, only 1 Kgs 11: 5, 7, 33 and 2 Kgs 23: 10, 13 mention Ashtoreth, Milkom/Molech,³⁵ and Chemosh. Only 1 Kgs 11: 5, 7 and 2 Kgs 23: 13, 24 use the term «abomination» (שקץ) and only 1 Kgs 11: 7 and 2 Kgs

³³ For H. Spieckermann הלך + אחרי (v. 5) and נטה + אחרי (v. 4) are «ähnliche Wendungen» (Hermann Spieckermann, *Juda unter Assur in der Sargonidenzeit*, FRLANT 129, Göttingen, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1982, p. 193).

³⁴ V. 4b and v. 6b both end with כדוד אביו (see also v. 33) and in both verses the accusation seems to be the same (לא היה לבבו שלם עם יהוה – לא מלא אחרי). The wording מלא אחרי is not easy to understand. L. Perlitt suggested for Deut 1: 36 to read מלא אחרי in the sense of הלך אחרי (see Lothar Perlitt, *Deuteronomium. 1. Teilband Deuteronomium 1-6**, BK V/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchner Verlag, 2013, p. 85). Such a reading is also given in LXX (see also Num 14: 24; 32: 11.12; Jos 14: 8.9.14 – cf. Sir 46: 6.10). In any case there is a clear difference between the two verses: v. 4b talks about Solomon's attitude, v. 6b – using piel – talks about his actions as given in v. 5.

³⁵ In v. 5 the God of the Ammonites is called מלכם and in v. 7 he is called מלך. Because of this difference P. Särkio sees the two verses belonging to different layers (see Pekka Särkio, *Die Weisheit und Macht Salomos in der israelitischen Historiographie. Eine traditions- und redaktionskritische Untersuchung über 1 Kön 3-5 und 9-11*, Schriften der Finnischen Exegetischen Gesellschaft 60, Helsinki and Göttingen, Finnish Exegetical Society and Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1994, p. 215). As is seen in Am 1: 15 and Jer 49: 3, the name of this God is a «sprechender Name», he is called «King» (cf. John Gray, *I & II Kings*, Old Testament Library, London, SCM Press, 1970, p. 276). So maybe the deviation in diction does not suggest different layers («king» vs. «their king»); cf. אדניהו and אדניה in 1 Kgs 1.

23: 13 locate the high places on the mountain opposite Jerusalem. Baruch Halpern conjectures that 1 Kgs 11: 7 is dependent upon 2 Kgs 23: 13.³⁶ But given that 1 Kgs 23: 13 mentions Chemosh, Molech, as well as Ashtoreth, whereas 1 Kgs 11: 7 only mentions the first two deities, 1 Kgs 23: 13 gives the impression of having collated the various deities of 1 Kgs 11: 5, 7 (cf. 1 Kgs 11: 33). 1 Kgs 11: 5, 7, on the other hand, presents a more differentiated picture.³⁷ According to 1 Kgs 11: 5, Solomon is himself a follower of Ashtoreth and Milkom. V. 7 claims that he first built cultic sites for Chemosh and Milkom and then built sites of worship for all the gods of his wives (v. 8). The special emphasis placed on the cultic sites of Chemosh and Milkom is probably due to the influence of Deut 23: 4.³⁸

V. 8 concludes the portrayal of Solomon's sin by referring once again to the foreign women from v. 1. A connection is also made with v. 2, for it mentions the foreign women and their worship as the cause of his sin. Interestingly, unlike v. 5, v. 8 does not men-

³⁶ Baruch Halpern, *The First Historians. The Hebrew Bible and History*, University Park, Pennsylvania State University Press, 1996, p.154.

³⁷ **אש** in v. 7 differentiates between two different phases.

³⁸ V. 8 follows v. 7 by saying that Solomon erected high places for all his foreign wives, so that they were able to offer incense and to sacrifice to their Gods. The syntax of vv. 7-8 is very complex. In v. 7 the reader learns that Solomon built a high place for Kemosh and that this sacrificial altar was placed on the mountain east of Jerusalem. Then follows the seemingly unconnected statement: « and for Molech the abomination of the Ammonites » (v. 7b). In LXX the naming of the location is missing – probably to disconnect Jerusalem from the high places (see John W. Wevers, « Exegetical Principles underlying the Septuagint Text of 1 Kings ii 12–xxi 43 », *OTS* 8, 1950, p. 300–322, p. 314). M. Mulder suggests that the naming of the location refers just to the high place for Kemosh (see Martin J. Mulder, *1 Kings. Volume 1: 1 Kings 1–11*, HCOT, Leuven, Peeters, 1998, p. 556). Nothing is said about the location of the high place for Molech. This way of reading v. 7 explains how v. 8 is connected to the preceding. V. 8 makes a statement about the building of high places for his foreign wives. V. 8 is connected via **וְכִן** to v. 7 and makes a statement about the building of further high places. But while v. 8 connects the building to his foreign wives, making it possible for them to sacrifice, v. 7 does not give a reason for the building of high places for Kemosh and Molech. V. 7 seems to suggest that Solomon build those high places by his own free will and intent (cf. v. 5; see also 2 Kgs 21: 3).

tion Solomon's own worship of these foreign gods. This was already done in v. 5, so that this comment (vv. 4-5) constitutes the centre of the section (vv. 1-8). Solomon's idolatry (הלך + אחרי), which in v. 10 is expressed and condemned with the Deuteronomic formula אלהים אחרים + אחרי + הלך, is thereby set in the centre of the presentation.

Which law is cited in v. 2a?

The phrase in v. 5 (divine name + אחרי + הלך) as well as the formula (הלך + אחרי + אלהים אחרים) in v. 10 evince a language that is either related to or influenced by Deuteronomy. The phrase most characteristic of the text ([לב]ב + נטה [vv. 2, 3, 4, 9]), however, only appears otherwise in Josh 24: 23 and 1 Kgs 8: 58 (cf. also Judg 9: 3; 2 Sam 19: 15).³⁹ The synchronic analysis of the legal text in 1 Kgs 11: 2 has demonstrated that the phrase לֹא־תִבְּאוּ בָהֶם וְהֵם לֹא־יָבֹאוּ בָכֶם also points towards the book of Joshua (Josh 23: 12; cf. also Josh 23: 7).⁴⁰ The use of דבק in relation to the nations in 1 Kgs 11: 2b is also comparable with the use of דבק in Josh 23: 12. Furthermore, Josh 23: 11 commands the Israelites to love (לאהבה) God, whereas Solomon transgressed the commandment of God by loving (לאהבה) foreign women. All of these connections indicate that 1 Kgs 11: 2 stands in some kind of a relationship with Josh 23: 12 and not Deut 7: 3-4.

Gary N. Knoppers already pointed out in 1996 that the prohibitions of mixed marriages in Deut 7: 3-4⁴¹ and 1 Kgs 11: 2 are quite distinct.⁴² The list of differences is long:

³⁹ See also יהוה and אלהי ישראל in Jos 24, 23.

⁴⁰ See also cf. Martin Noth, *Könige. 1. Teilband*, BK IX/1, Neukirchen-Vluyn, Neukirchener Verlag, 1968, p. 247.

⁴¹ Translation: ³ You shall not relate by marriage with them, you shall not give your daughter to his son and you shall not take his daughter for your son, ⁴ for they will turn away your son from following me, to serve other gods. Then the anger of the YHWH will be kindled against you, and he will destroy you quickly.

⁴² See Gary N. Knoppers, « Solomon's Fall and Deuteronomy », in *The Age of Solomon. Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, edited by L. K. Handy, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 11, Leiden, Brill, 1997, p. 392-

1. Deut 7: 3-4 forbid intermarrying with the indigenous nations of Canaan. Of these nations, only the Hittites are mentioned in 1 Kgs 11: 1.

2. Deut 7: 3-4 forbid creating marriage alliances with these nations, but its focus is upon bearing responsibility for one's own children, who should not be given into marriage with these nations. 1 Kgs 11: 2, on the other hand, focuses more on one's own personal responsibility.

3. In Deut 7: 4 the punishment is destruction, whereas in 1 Kgs 11: 2 no punishment is mentioned. The narrative contained in 1 Kgs 11 does not report the destruction of Solomon. The final punishment only affects his successor (cf. vv. 11-13).

The only parallel between 1 Kgs 11: 2 and Deut 7: 4 consists in the danger posed by idolatry. In Josh 23: 12⁴³ this danger is not explicitly mentioned, it is only intimated by the command to love God in v. 11 (but cf. Josh 23: 7). This similarity between Deut 7: 4 and 1 Kgs 11: 2 leads Gary N. Knoppers to conclude that the author of 1 Kgs 11: 1-2 worked with both legal texts, Deut 7: 3-4 and Josh 23: 12.⁴⁴ However, it is not possible to establish an intentional intertextual relationship between Deut 7: 3-4 and 1 Kgs 11: 2. In both texts the warning about turning away from God is similarly grounded yet differently formulated (כִּי־יִסֹר אֶת־בְּנֶךָ מֵאַחֲרֵי וְעָבְדוּ (אֲכַן יֵטוּ אֶת־לִבְבָכֶם אַחֲרֵי אֱלֹהֵיהֶם vs. אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים). It is therefore more likely that 1 Kgs 11: 2 has either adapted the command in Josh 23: 12 or alludes to it. This thesis is further supported by the fact that the metaphorically expressed punishment threatened in Josh 23: 13f. (וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לֶפֶחַ וּלְמוֹקֵשׁ וּלְשֹׁטֶט בְּצַדִּיכֶם וּלְצַנְגִּים בְּעֵינֵיכֶם) is realized by the appearance of Hadad the Edomite and Rezon. Nev-

410, p. 399. He reads 1 Kgs 11: 2 as a prohibition of sexual intercourse and Deut 7: 4 as a prohibition of exogamy.

⁴³ Translation: ¹² For if you turn back and cling to the remnant of these nations, these remaining among you and relate by marriage with them, so that you associate with them and they with you...

⁴⁴ See Gary N. Knoppers, « Solomon's Fall and Deuteronomy », in *The Age of Solomon. Scholarship at the Turn of the Millennium*, edited by L. K. Handy, Studies in the History and Culture of the Ancient Near East 11, Leiden, Brill, 1997, p. 392-410, p. 400.

ertheless, there are also a number of arguments against the thesis that 1 Kgs 11: 2 is based upon Josh 23: 12:⁴⁵

1. 1 Kgs 11: 2 cites a word of God (אֱמַר יְהוָה) whereas Josh 23: 12 is part of Joshua's farewell speech.

2. The הַגּוֹיִם הָאֵלֶּה in Joshua's warning in Josh 23: 12 creates a link back to v. 4. Unlike Deut 7: 1, which mentions nations, this verse outlines a region, namely the region from the Jordan to the Mediterranean Sea. It is conceivable that the interpretation of this description in 1 Kgs 11: 2 has picked up on the phrase וְכָל-הַגּוֹיִם אֲשֶׁר הִכְרַתִּי and adjusted the description to be in line with the conquests of David. David had fought wars against Moab (2 Sam 8: 2), Ammon (2 Sam 10: 1-9; 12: 26-31) and Edom (2 Sam 8: 13-14) and he had subjugated them all. And Hiram, the king of the Sidonians, was subordinate to him (2 Sam 5: 11-12).⁴⁶

3. The strongest counterargument is Josh 23: 12's lack of a warning that idolatry is the outcome of mixed marriages. However, this warning can be deduced from the command in v. 11 to love God (לְאַהֲבָה; cf. 1 Kgs 11: 2b). Furthermore, within the broader context we find a summon to turn to God using יְהוָה + לֵבב + נָטָה (Josh 24: 23; cf. 1 Kgs 11: 9; cf. 1 Kgs 11: 2, 3, 4) as well as a warning against idolatry using לֵבב + נָטָה (Josh 24: 7).

These observations suggest that 1 Kgs 11: 2 and Josh 23: 12 are closely related. Either 1 Kgs 11: 2 considered the words of Joshua to possess divine authority, or Josh 23: 12 and 1 Kgs 11: 2 both presuppose a word of God that is no longer extant.

The analysis thus far can be summarized as follows: according to 1 Kgs 11: 5 and 10, Solomon went after other gods (הַלֵךְ + אַחֲרֵי + אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים), thereby transgressing a prohibition that appears frequently in Deuteronomy. However, 1 Kgs 11: 1-8 does not explicitly refer to a law in Deuteronomy. The basis for the condemnation of Solomon is contained in a divine commandment that is cited in 1 Kgs 11: 2. This commandment does not allude to Deut

⁴⁵ That 1 Kgs 11: 2 does not mention the prohibition of intermarrying (חֲתָן hitphael; cf. Deut 7,3-4) is not against this thesis: בּוֹא + בַּיְמֵינוּ includes this prohibition.

⁴⁶ The Hittites are included in Jos 24: 3.

7: 3-4; it is rather either an interpretation of Josh 23: 12 or it presupposes a law no longer extant that stands behind Josh 23: 12 and 1 Kgs 11: 2. As such, 1 Kgs 11: 5 and 10 use language in the style of Deuteronomy (cf. also 1 Kgs 11: 9) in order to denote Solomon's offense but do not make explicit reference to an actual law within Deuteronomy.

Solomon and the Law of the King

1 Kgs 11: 5 and 10 are concerned with the non-observance of the Deuteronomic command not to follow other gods (Deut 6: 14; 8: 19; 11: 28; 13: 3; 28: 14). In addition to this, it is often claimed that Solomon's sin must be interpreted in the context of the law of the king in Deut 17: 14-20. Marc Z. Brettler, for example, comes to the following conclusion: « It is thus likely that some form of Deut. 17.14-17 existed before the redaction of Kings, and the similarities between that passage and 1 Kgs 9.26-11.10 reflect the influence of some form of Deut. 17.14-17 rather than vice versa. »⁴⁷ His primary arguments are as follows:

1. The use of רבות in 1 Kgs 11: 1 refers to the large number of women as in Deut 17: 17a (cf. also 1 Kgs 11: 3a).

2. The warning that the king's heart should not defect from God (וְלֹא יִסּוּד לְבָבוֹ – Deut 17: 17a) resonates with the warning and the assessment that Solomon's heart has turned or has been turned from God (אחרי + לב + נטה – 1 Kgs 11: 2, 3, 4, 9).⁴⁸

On the basis of these observations, he points out the following:

1. In 1 Kgs 10: 2, 10, 11 Solomon's wealth is described using מאד (ה)רב(ה), and he compares this with the prohibition in Deut 17: 17b: לא ירבה לו מאד.

⁴⁷ Marc. Z. Brettler, « The Structure of 1 Kings 1-11 », *JSOT* 49, 1991, p. 87-97, p. 93.

⁴⁸ See Marc. Z. Brettler, « The Structure of 1 Kings 1-11 », *JSOT* 49, 1991, p. 87-97, p. 91f.

2. 1 Kgs 9: 28; 10: 10, 14f.'s description of the large amount of gold and silver possessed by Solomon: this clearly presents it as « complete violation » of Deut 17: 17b.⁴⁹

3. The large number of horses, and especially their acquisition from Egypt (1 Kgs 10: 28f), is a clear transgression of Deut 17: 16.

4. He outlines the structure of 1 Kgs 9: 26-11: 1-10 as consisting in three sections: 1 Kgs 9: 26-10: 25 (Solomon's wealth), 1 Kgs 10: 26-29 (Solomon's horses), and 1 Kgs 11: 1-10 (Solomon's wives). These sections demonstrate Solomon's transgression of the law of the king.

The first thing to be said in response to this is that Marc Z. Brettler's very first observation is misleading. 1 Kgs 1: 1-8 is not concerned with the quantity of Solomon's wives, but with the fact that they led him to turn away from God and build cultic sites for their deities. The large number is mentioned in vv. 1a, 3a, but it does not stand in the foreground.

A closer look at the syntax of Deut 17: 17a and Deut 17: 16-17⁵⁰ as a whole highlights how different they are to the portrayal of Solomon in 1 Kgs 9: 25-11: 8.

Deut 17: 16f. contains three prohibitions which are each formulated using *לֹא יִרְבֶּה לוֹ*. The first two prohibitions are further specified with a phrase using *יִקְטֹל* + *לֹא*. The general prohibition in v. 16aα is followed by the specification that the nation should not return to Egypt in order to buy horses.⁵¹ The hypothesis that this is an allusion to Solomon's purchase of horses in Egypt (1 Kgs 10: 28f.) is excluded by the use of the term *עַם*.⁵² It is the nation

⁴⁹ Marc. Z. Brettler, « The Structure of 1 Kings 1-11 », *JSOT* 49, 1991, p. 87-97, p. 92.

⁵⁰ Translation: ¹⁶ Only he shall not accumulate [a great number of] horses for himself or cause the people to turn to Egypt in order to acquire many horses. YHWH has said to you: You shall never return that way again. ¹⁷ And he shall not accumulate [a great number of] wives for himself, lest he will lose his mind, nor silver and gold shall he accumulate for himself in great quantity.

⁵¹ For the use of *סוס* in the singular and in the plural in v. 16, see 2 Kgs 6: 14f. The plural means horses in general and the singular means horses as part of the military force (as in *סוס ורכב*).

⁵² R. Albertz suggests that *עַם* means here, like in Ex 14: 6; 17: 13, « men at arms » (see Rainer Albertz, « A possible *terminus ad quem* for the deuteronomistic

whom the king should not induce to turn to Egypt (שוב has the sense of « to turn to someone/to follow someone »; cf. Ps 73: 10; Isa 2: 9 etc.). The idea *לשוב מצרימה* already occurs in Ex 13: 17 (cf. Deut 17: 16b β): God decides not to lead Israel through the land of the Philistines because he is afraid that when confronted with war Israel would once again turn to Egypt for help, as was to occur frequently in Israel's later history. One passage that is contextually related to Deut 17: 16 is Isa 31: 1, where trust in Egyptian horses and chariots is contrasted with trust in God.⁵³ This reading is supported by the Temple Scroll, which inserts *למלחמה* (11Q19 LVI: 16): « do not return the people to Egypt on account of war ».⁵⁴ The general prohibition against owning too many horses in v. 16a β is thus specified in the rest of the verse to mean that one should not again make oneself dependent upon Egypt for the sake of war horses and military alliances. Evidence for Solomon's many horses is found in 1 Kgs 5: 6 and 1 Kgs 10: 25f., 28f. The statement concerning his horses in 1 Kgs 5: 6 occurs in a positive eulogy and 1 Kgs 5: 5 describes the peace that Judah and Israel enjoyed as a result of Solomon's rule. The horse theme in 1 Kgs 10: 25f. and 28f. links up with this. There is no indication that Solomon is being judged in a negative light.

Deut 17: 17a has an analogous structure to v. 16. A general prohibition is further specified. The general prohibition first refers to the size of the king's harem. Here, no reference is made to the nationality of the women; the focus is on the exaggerated quantity. As such, the text has a completely different thrust to 1 Kgs 11: 1-8, which is primarily concerned with the foreign nationality of the women and only secondarily with their number (vv. 1a, 3a). Verse 15 of the law of the king uses the adjective *נכרי*.

Legislation – A fresh Look at Deut 17: 16 », in *Homeland and Exile*. Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded. Edited by Gershon Galil, Mark Geller and Alan Millard, Leiden, Brill, 2009, p. 271-296, p. 282 fn. 48).

⁵³ Cf. Reinhard Achenbach, « Das sogenannte Königsgesetz in Deuteronomium 17,14-20 », ZABR 15, 2009, 216-233, p. 229.

⁵⁴ Rainer Albertz, « A possible *terminus ad quem* for the deuteronomistic Legislation – A fresh Look at Deut 17: 16 », in *Homeland and Exile*. Biblical and Ancient Near Eastern Studies in Honour of Bustenay Oded. Edited by Gershon Galil, Mark Geller and Alan Millard, Leiden, Brill, 2009, p. 271-296, p. 282.

It is thus even more striking that this adjective is not used in v. 17. As such, Deut 17: 17a α is exclusively concerned with the multiplicity of the women. The specification $\text{וְלֹא יִסּוּר לְבָבוֹ}$ could imply that the prohibition concerns foreign women (cf. סוֹר in Deut 7: 4). However, it is striking that whenever apostasy from God is expressed with the phrase $\text{לֵב} + \text{סוֹר}$ (Jer 17: 5, cf. also Deut 7: 4), the object turned away from is identified using מִן . Deut 17: 17a β , however, does not identify such an object. A similar construction to Deut 17: 17a β occurs in Job 12: 24, where it refers to loss of understanding rather than idolatrous worship. As such, the danger envisioned in Deut 17: 17a is not that a large number of foreign women might lead the king into idolatry and apostasy but that a large harem would cause him to lose his mind. We can therefore conclude that 1 Kgs 11: 1-8 and Deut 17: 17a have different concerns.

All that remains to be answered is the question of whether Deut 17: 17b is connected with Solomon's fall into sin. As in Deut 17: 17a α , the claim here is that Solomon—viewed canonically—has transgressed the commandment: $\text{וְנָסַף וְזָהָב לֹא יִרְבֶּה־לּוֹ מְאֹד}$. Yet, within 1 Kgs 1-11, Solomon's wealth is never considered to be a problem. 1 Kgs 9-10 contains a description of the superabundance of gold and silver during his lifetime (for silver, cf. 1 Kgs 10: 21, 23, 25, 27; for gold, 1 Kgs 9: 28; 10: 2, 10f., 14, 16-18, 21f., 25). In none of these passages is this seen in a negative light, indeed it is considered to be evidence that God's promises have been realized. In 1 Kgs 3: 13 God promised Solomon that his wealth would make him incomparable within his lifetime. 1 Kgs 9-10 expresses the fulfilment of this promise.⁵⁵

⁵⁵ In this context it has too often been overlooked that unambiguous textual signals in 1 Kgs 11 generate a clear contrast with Solomon's portrayal thus far. Whereas 1 Kgs 3: 3 records that Solomon kept the statutes of David and loved God, 1 Kgs 11: 4 reports that Solomon's heart was no longer wholly dedicated to God, unlike the heart of David (cf. v. 6 – cf. also the inclusion of the keyword אֱהָב from 1 Kgs 3: 3 in 1 Kgs 11: 1). 1 Kgs 3: 3 qualifies Solomon's love by pointing out that he sacrificed upon the high places – because at that point there was not yet a temple. After the construction of the temple it is repeatedly reported that Solomon worshipped within the temple (1 Kgs 8: 5, 62-64; 9: 25; 10: 5). Yet 1 Kgs 11: 5-8 reports Solomon's idolatry and his construction of cultic heights for

These observations make clear that Deut 17: 16f. could not have served as the *Vorlage* of 1 Kgs 9: 28-11: 8.⁵⁶

Conclusion

The result of this textual analysis can be succinctly summarized: 1 Kgs 11: 5, 9, and 10 are composed in a language that is typical of the book of Deuteronomy (אלהים אחרים + אחרי + הלך and אנף in the Hithpael). 1 Kgs 11: 10 associates Solomon's fall into sin with his worship of other gods. However, the legal transgression that marks Solomon's fall is not identified by means of a law from the book of Deuteronomy. Instead, 1 Kgs 11: 2 is either an interpretation of Josh 23: 12 or it refers to a no longer extant law that underlies both Josh 23: 12 and 1 Kgs 11: 2. Furthermore, 1 Kgs 9: 25-11: 8 is not based on the proscriptions for the king contained in the law of the king (Deut 17: 16-17).

foreign gods. A conscious contrast is being made here between 1 Kgs 11 and the rest of Solomon's narrative.

⁵⁶ It is much more likely that Deut 17: 14-20 as a whole was composed in light of the narration of the history of the kings: Thomas Römer, « La loi du roi en Deutéronome 17 et ses fonctions », in *Loi et justice dans la littérature du Proche-Orient ancien*, BZAR 20, edited by Olivier Artus, Wiesbaden, Harrassowitz Verlag, 2013, p. 99-111, p. 110-111.

Queen Athaliah as a Literary-Historical Figure

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Résumé. Cet article réexamine en détail l'histoire de Joas-Athalie (2 Rois 11). Il suggère que l'histoire a été écrite après l'exil et reflète la langue, l'idéologie et la réalité de l'époque de l'auteur. L'histoire a été façonnée à partir de sources bibliques et extra-bibliques plus anciennes et grâce à l'imagination créative de son auteur. Parmi ces sources, on trouve la tragédie grecque classique du meurtre d'Agamemnon et de la vengeance d'Oreste, qui a modelé les grandes lignes du récit de Joas-Athalie.

The biblical story of the rise and fall of Athaliah¹ (2 Kings 11) is an enclosed literary unit integrated between the story of the death of Athaliah's son Ahaziah and the reign of her grandson Jehoash. It opens with the description of Athaliah murdering all descendants of the House of David except for the one-year old baby Jehoash, who was rescued by his aunt Jehosheba, "away from where the king's sons were being killed" and hidden for six years in the temple. Following the murder, Athaliah usurped the throne and reigned over the kingdom (2 Kgs 11:1-3). After the exposition, the plot shifts from the palace to the temple and the narrator relates

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¹ For the name Athaliah, see recently S. Dalley, "Yabâ, Atalya and the Foreign Policy of Late Assyrian Kings", *SAAB* XII/2 (1998), p. 83-98; idem, "Recent evidence from Assyrian sources for Judaeon history from Uzziah to Manasseh", *JSOT* 28,4 (2004), p. 387-402; K. Radner, "Atalia", in idem (ed.), *The Prosopography of the Neo-Assyrian Empire*, vol. 1 Part 2 (The Neo-Assyrian Text Corpus Project), University of Helsinki 1999, p. 433; R. Achenbach, "JABÂ und ATALJA - zwei jüdische Königstöchter am assyrischen Königshof? Zu einer These von Stephanie Dalley", *BN* 113 (2002), p. 29-38; K.L. Younger, "Yahweh at Ashkelon and Calah? Yahwistic Names in Neo-Assyrian", *VT* 52 (2002), p. 207-218.

in detail the preparations for a rebellion aiming to overthrow the usurper queen and instate the legitimate heir on his father's throne (v. 4-8). The author describes in a colorful manner the public coronation of the young prince (v. 9-12), the execution of the illegitimate queen (v. 13-17), the conclusion of a treaty between God, the king, and the people (v. 17), the cult reform (v. 18), and finally the procession that accompanied the crowned young prince from the temple to the palace (v. 19-20a).

Researchers and commentators frequently discuss this exceptional story in an effort to evaluate its literary structure and artistic quality, to sort out the original plot from its assumed late additions, to clarify its author's ideological objectives, to unravel its sources, and to investigate its historical contribution to the history of the Kingdom of Judah.² Most controversial are the issues of the scope and date of the original story and its historical core. In the early stage of research, scholars either treated the story as a single coherent literary unit³ or divided it to two main strata (v. 1-

² In addition to the commentaries, see H.-D. Hoffmann, *Reform und Reformen: Untersuchungen zu einem Grundthema der deuteronomistischen Geschichtsschreibung* (ATANT 66), Zürich 1980, p. 104-113; C. Levin, *Der Sturz der Königin Atalja: Ein Kapitel zur Geschichte Judas im 9. Jahrhundert v. Chr.* (Stuttgarter Bibelstudien 105), Stuttgart 1982; L.M. Barré, *The Rhetoric of Political Persuasion. The Narrative Artistry and Political Inventions of 2 Kings 9-11* (CBQ Monograph Series 20), Washington, DC 1988; P. Dutcher-Walls, *Narrative Art, Political Rhetoric: The Case of Athaliah and Joash* (JSOTSup 209), Sheffield 1996, with earlier literature on p. 188-193; A. Lemaire, "Athalie anti-héroïne ou héroïne tragique", in J.-M. Durand, T. Römer and M. Langlois (eds.), *Le jeune héros. Recherches sur la formation et la diffusion d'un thème littéraire au Proche-Orient ancien* (Actes du colloque organisé par les chaires d'Assyriologie et des milieux bibliques du Collège de France, Paris, les 6-7 avril 2009), Göttingen 2011, p. 261-272; O. Sergi, "Queenship in Judah Revisited: Athaliah and the Davidic Dynasty in Historical Perspective", in J.-M. Durand, M. Guichard, T. Römer (eds.), *Tabou et transgressions* (Actes du colloque organisé par le Collège de France, Paris, les 11-12 avril 2012; OBO 274), Göttingen 2015, p. 99-112, with earlier literature.

³ W. Rudolph, "Die Einheitlichkeit der Erzählung von Sturz der Atalja", in B. Baumgartner, O. Eissfeldt, K. Elliger, L. Rost (eds.), *Festschrift Alfred Bertholet zum 80. Geburtstag*, Tübingen 1950, p. 473-478; Hoffmann, op. cit., p. 106-108; M. Cogan, H. Tadmor, *II Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 11), Garden City, NY, 1988, p. 131-132; B.O. Long, *2 Kings* (FOTL X), Grand Rapids 1991, p. 145-147; idem, "Sacred Geography as Narrative Structure in 2 Kings 11", in D.P. Wright, D.N. Freedman, A. Hurvitz (eds.), *Pomegranates and*

12, 18b-20 and 13-18a).⁴ Recently, however, some scholars identified up to four compositional stages in the development of the story. Needless to say, no consensus exists among these scholars on the reconstruction of the different literary strata, as each scholar suggests his own reconstruction of the literary process.⁵ The date of the original story is also debated; some scholars assume that it was composed not long after the related events whereas others attribute its composition to the Deuteronomist in the late monarchic or early exilic period.⁶

Furthermore, the historicity of the story is most perplexing. The author neither supplies any viable explanation for Athaliah's murderous act nor clarifies who supported the usurper or what her legitimation for the throne was (v. 1-3). Clearly, moreover, a temple is no place to raise children, and the six-year sojourn of the Princess Jehosheba and the baby Jehoash in the sacred precinct remains inexplicable.⁷ Likewise, the deployment of all units

Golden Bells. Studies in Biblical, Jewish and Near Eastern Ritual, Law and Literature in Honor of Jacob Milgrom, Winona Lake 1995, p. 231-238; Dutcher-Walls, op. cit., p. 23-49.

⁴ B. Stade, "Anmerkungen zu 2 Kön 10-14", ZAW 5 (1885), p. 280-288; C. Steuernagel, *Lehrbuch der Einleitung in das Alte Testament mit einem Anhang über die Apokryphen und Pseudepigraphen*, Tübingen 1912, p. 364, 374; J.A. Montgomery, H.S. Gehman, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Books of Kings* (ICC). Edinburgh 1951, p. 417-418; J. Gray, *1 & 2 Kings - a Commentary* (2nd rev. ed.; OTL), Philadelphia 1970, p. 566-568; T.N.D. Mettinger, *King and Messiah. The Civil and Sacred Legitimation of the Israelite King* (Coniectanea Biblica. Old Testament Series), Lund 1976, p. 142-144.

⁵ Levin, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 18-77; E. Würthwein, *Die Bücher der Könige: I Kön 17-II Kön 25* (ATD 11/2), Göttingen 1984, 344-351; Barré, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 23-29, 86-97, 120-124, 128-130; V. Fritz, *1 & 2 Kings - a Continental Commentary*, Minneapolis 2003, p. 296-297.

⁶ Some scholars who treated the story as a single coherent literary unit attributed its composition to the Deuteronomist. See Hoffmann, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 106-112; T.R. Hobbs, *2 Kings* (WBC 13), Waco 1985, p. 135-136; Dutcher-Walls, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 23-27; Long, op. cit. (above, n. 3 - 1991), p. 146-147, 154. Note, however, that in his late work, Long suggested that priestly ideology is the key for understanding the Jehoash story (op. cit., above, n. 3 - 1995, p. 234-236).

⁷ To overcome the difficulty, the Chronicler made Jehosheba the wife of the priest Jehoiada (2 Chr 22: 11). H. Schulte ("Die Rettung des Prinzen Joas. Zur Exegese von II Reg 11,1-3", ZAW 109 [1997] p. 549-556) suggested that she was

of the royal guard in the temple rather than the palace is most unusual. In addition, Carians/Carites mercenaries served in the Levant only as of the seventh century BCE onward; clearly, the reference to their name in v. 4 and 19 is anachronistic.⁸ Also exceptional is the role of the priest Jehoiada as initiating and directing the rebellion. In the monarchical period, priests were confined to the temple, served as royal officials under the supervision of the kings (see 2 Sam 8:17; 20:25; 1 Kgs 4:4), and remained uninvolved in administrating the state's internal affairs. The description of the priest who initiated the rebellion, made the royal guard swear an oath, gave them operative orders, organized the coronation, and ordered the execution of the usurper queen does not fit the reality of the monarchical period. Indeed, whereas in the description of Josiah's reform it is the king who conducts the covenant with the people (2 Kgs 23:1-3), in the episode under discussion the priest Jehoiada concludes the ceremonial alliance "between YHWH and the king and the people" (v. 17a). Generally, kings conducted the conclusion of treaties in the ancient Near East and the Levant; the role of the priest Jehoiada as mediator between the different social groups of the kingdom is historically dubious.

In addition, Chapter 11 includes a distinctive priestly ideology, as well as priestly linguistic expressions; and various similarities also exist between the story and other biblical narratives (as dis-

consecrated to the temple (קדשה). This conclusion seems unlikely, however, since the consecration of princesses to serve in the temple is known from Mesopotamia, not from the Levant.

⁸ For the Carians/Carites, see Cogan, Tadmor, op. cit. (above, n. 3), p. 126, with earlier literature. Carians are mentioned frequently in the Neo/Late Babylonian documents. See R. Zadok, "On Anatolians, Greeks and Egyptians in 'Chaldean' and Achaemenid Babylonia", *Tel Aviv* 32 (2005), p. 80-95; C. Waerzeggers, "The Carians of Borsippa", *Iraq* 68 (2006), p. 1-22. For the service of the Carians in the Egyptian army in the Time of the XXVth Dynasty and the Persian period, see R.M. Cook, "Amasis and the Greeks in Egypt", *JHS* 57 (1937), p. 227-237; J.D. Ray, "Soldiers to Pharaoh: The Carians of Southwest Anatolia", in J.M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, vol. II, London 1995, p. 1185-1194; P. Kaplan, "Cross-Cultural Contacts among Mercenary Communities in Saite and Persian Egypt", *Mediterranean Historical Review* 18/1 (2003), p. 1-31, with earlier literature.

cussed below). All these exceptional elements call for a profound investigation of the origin, ideology, date, and historicity of the Athaliah-Jehoash story.

In what follows, I first analyze the literary-historical framework in which the story was integrated into the Book of Kings. In light of the conclusions drawn from this analysis, I re-examine Chapter 11 in an effort to further illuminate its artistic quality, linguistic components, ideological messages, and affinity to other stories in the Books of Samuel and Kings. I demonstrate that the story comprises a late work composed during the post-exilic period –long after the period related in the story– and that it reflects the language, ideology, and reality of the time in which it was written.

The Intended Continuity between the Histories of Ahaziah and Jehoash

To introduce the discussion, I hereby cite the biblical texts that relate the transition from the reign of Ahaziah to that of his son Jehoash and compare them to the related transition of reign between Amon to Josiah.

He [Ahaziah] was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned one year in Jerusalem ... He followed the ways of the House of Ahab and did what was displeasing to YHWH just like the House of Ahab ... (2 Kgs 8:26-27).

Jehoash was seven years old when he became king ... and he reigned forty years in Jerusalem. ... Jehoash did what was pleasing to YHWH all his days ... (2 Kgs 12:1-3).

Amon was twenty-two years old when he became king, and he reigned two years in Jerusalem. ... He did what was displeasing to YHWH, just as Manasseh his father had done (2 Kgs 21:19-21).

Josiah was eight years old when he became king, and he reigned thirty-one years in Jerusalem. ... He did what was pleasing to YHWH; he followed all the ways of David, his ancestor, straying neither to the right nor to the left (2 Kgs 22:1-2).

A striking similarity exists in the characteristics of the two pairs of kings. Both Ahaziah and Amon were twenty-two years old when ascending the throne; the former reigned for one year and was murdered near Megiddo (2 Kgs 9:27),⁹ and the latter reigned for two years and was murdered in his palace (2 Kgs 21:23). They both followed the sinful ways of their ancestors, thereby displeasing YHWH. Jehoash and Josiah ascended the throne as young boys, the former at the age of seven and the latter at the age of eight. Coregents must have reigned in their name until they reached maturity, but the text remains silent on their identities. The two of them did what was pleasing to YHWH, although Josiah, who directed the ultimate cult reform, is presented in a much more favorite light.

Notably, the resemblance between the histories of Jehoash and Josiah continues further. Not only were the two kings known by similar names,¹⁰ they are the only Judahite kings whose restoration of the temple is related in detail in the Book of Kings (2 Kgs 12:5-17; 2 Kgs 22:3-6). I already discussed the histories of the two kings, examined the close similarity of the texts, and noted the same words and motifs that these texts share.¹¹ In both restora-

⁹ According to the Book of Kings, both Ahaziah and Josiah were murdered near Megiddo. The death of Josiah near Megiddo is doubtless historical, whereas the death of Ahaziah near Megiddo is dubious; Hazael relates in the Tel Dan inscription that he killed Joram of Israel and Ahaziah of Judah, possibly in the course of an armed struggle at Ramoth-Gilead. For discussions, see A. Biran, J. Naveh, "The Tel Dan Inscription: A New Fragment", *IEJ* 45 (1995), p. 1-18; N. Na'aman, "Three Notes on the Aramaic Inscription from Tel Dan", *IEJ* 50 (2000), p. 100-104; idem, "The Story of Jehu's Rebellion: Hazael's Inscription and the Biblical Narrative", *IEJ* 56 (2006), p. 160-166.

¹⁰ For an interpretation of the names and the way in which their similarity influenced the works of the authors of the Books of Kings and Chronicles, see J. Jarick, "The Two Ahabs of the South: Joash and Josiah", in I. Provan, M. Boda (eds.), *Let us Go Up to Zion. Essays in Honour of H. G. M. Williamson on the Occasion of his Sixty-Five Birthday* (VTS 153), Leiden and Boston 2012, p. 307-316.

¹¹ N. Na'aman, "Royal Inscriptions and the Histories of Jehoash and Ahaz, Kings of Judah", *VT* 48 (1998), p. 337-344; idem, "Notes on the Temple 'Restorations' of Jehoash and Josiah", *VT* 63 (2013), p. 640-643; O. Lipschits, "On Cash-Boxes and Finding or Not Finding Books: Jehoash's and Josiah's Decisions to Repair the Temple", in Y. Amit, E. Ben Zvi, I. Finkelstein, O. Lipschits (eds.),

tions, the priest plays an important role: Jehoiada as the initiator of the new procedure of collecting the silver for the temple restoration (2 Kgs 12:7-10) and Hilkiah as discoverer of the Book of the Law (23:8, 10). In the two texts, the royal scribe and priest supervise the collection of the silver.¹²

I posit that the close similarity between the histories of Ahaziah and Jehoash, on the one hand, and those of Amon and Josiah, on the other hand, cannot be accidental. Rather, one author (the Deuteronomist [DtrG]),¹³ who probably operated in the late years of King Josiah, deliberately designed this correspondence.

The literary continuity between the accounts of the murder of Ahaziah and the ascending to the throne of his son Jehoash, supported by the close similarity to the histories of Amon and Josiah, relates that the Athaliah-Jehoash story interrupts this continuity. Moreover, the latter story blurs the author's intended similarity between the histories of the pairs Ahaziah-Jehoash and Amon-Josiah. Could this story possibly be a late composition, written in order to provide an equivalent Judahite story to that of Jehu's rebellion and inserted into its present place by a late redactor?¹⁴ Investigating the composition date of Chapter 11 comprises the key to answering this question and to evaluating the Athaliah-Jehoash story as a potential source for the history of Judah in the second half of the ninth century BCE.

Essays on Ancient Israel in Its Near Eastern Context. A Tribute to Nadav Na'aman, Winona Lake 2006, p. 239-254, with earlier literature.

¹² For the joint supervision of the palace and temple officials, see Na'aman, *op. cit.* -2013, p. 643-648.

¹³ Hoffmann *op. cit.* (above, n. 2), 108-110; Long, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3 - 1991), p. 154.

¹⁴ Würthwein (*op. cit.* [above, n. 5], p. 345) noted that the negative evaluation of Athaliah does not follow the common deuteronomistic formula and suggested that "(d)as spricht dafür, dass es sich um ein dem Stoff nach älteres, aber redaktionell später nachgetragenes Stück aus jüdischer Überlieferung handelt, das noch mehrere Bearbeitungen erfahren hat".

The Athaliah-Jehoash Story as a Classical Drama

Concerning the integrity of the Athaliah-Jehoash story, I support the position of those scholars who treat it as a single entity, with no more than few, minor late additions (e.g., v. 17b, which is missing in 2 Chr 23:16 and the Luc. of the LXX). Close examination of the arguments that scholars offered for considering parts of the story to be later additions reveals that such arguments mainly rest on the assumption that the original story was composed during the monarchical period. Hence, texts that include Priestly terminology and ideology were considered part of the late redaction of the original pre-exilic composition.¹⁵ This assumption, however, is quite unfounded. As suggested in the next parts of the article, indications exist that the story was first composed in the post-exilic period and that the assumed late elements reflect the time in which it was written.

Extensive literature has already been written on the Athaliah-Jehoash story, and scholars have examined in detail its literary structure and motifs, as well as its ideology and rhetoric.¹⁶ These discussions serve as the point of departure for my analysis of the story.

Of particular importance for my investigation are Mario Liverani's observations regarding the dramatic and theatrical nature of the story. According to his analysis, the plot is constructed in the shape of a classical drama and presents the protagonist (Jehoash and Jehoiada), the antagonist (Athaliah), the defender of the protagonist (Jehoiada), and the choir (the people).¹⁷ Each of the drama's heroes operates according to its role in the dramatic plot. The author presented Athaliah as bloodthirsty, pursuing the throne with no hindrance and willing to murder everyone who may block her way to the throne. Jehoiada is depicted as a man of God who seeks to re-establish the legitimate heir to the throne

¹⁵ For scholars who adhered to this methodology, see above, note 5.

¹⁶ For literary discussions and bibliography, see Barré, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2), p. 86-97; Long, *op. cit.* (above, n. 3 - 1991), p. 145-153; Dutcher-Walls, *op. cit.* (above, n. 2), p. 69-86, 98-101.

¹⁷ M. Liverani, "L'histoire de Joas", *VT* 24 (1974), p. 438-439, 447-450.

and to bring the cult to its former purity. He accomplishes these aims by secretly organizing the rebellion and coronation; killing the usurper; renewing the treaty between YHWH, the king and the people; and destroying the House of Baal. Liverani describes the story's theatrical features as follows: "Ce n'est pas par hasard que bien de ces éléments représentent la structure typique du drame classique".¹⁸

The description of the episode indeed includes remarkable ceremonial and dramatic elements. Note the preparation for the main scene (v. 4-8), in which the three segments of the guard are positioned on the three sides of the stage. The coronation scene (v. 10-12) is wholly theatrical, and the reader can envision the guards standing in a long line with their ceremonial weapons, "from the south end of the House to the north of the House", as well as the arrival of the young king and his endowment with the royal insignia of the diadem and the testimony (עדות).¹⁹ The sounds of music and noise are integral parts of the dramatic elements (v. 12: "they clapped their hands and shouted, 'Long live the king!'" v. 14: "all the People of the Land rejoicing and blowing the trumpets"). The voices are so loud that they reach Athaliah in the royal palace, and she, on her part, adds a loud noise to the orchestra of sounded voices (v. 14b).

The figures in the related drama are shaped both by their direct speech and by their deeds. Note, for example, v. 13-15:

When Athaliah heard the shouting of the guards [and] the people, she came out to the people in the House of YHWH. She saw the king standing by the pillar as was the custom, the officers with the trumpets beside the king, and all the People of the Land rejoicing

¹⁸ Liverani, op. cit., p. 450.

¹⁹ The most common interpretation of עדות is "testimony"; see G. von Rad, "The Royal Ritual in Judah", in *Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, New York 1966, p. 225-229; Würthwein, op. cit. (above, n. 5), p. 348; D.J.A. Clines (ed.), *DCH* 6, p. 279b; L. Koehler, W. Baumgartner, J.J. Stamm, *HALOT* 2, 790b-791a, with earlier literature. For a different interpretation, see S. Yeivin, "Edüth", *IEJ* 24 (1974), p. 17-20; S. Dalley, "The God Šalmu and the Winged Disk", *Iraq* 48 (1986), p. 85, 92, 101; Cogan, Tadmor, op. cit. (above, n. 3), p. 128.

and blowing trumpets. Athaliah rent (ותקרע) her garments and shouted (ותקרא), 'treason, treason'.

Noteworthy are the use of different verbal forms for Athaliah (always *wayyiqtol*) and the king and people, as well as the deliberate selection of verbs pronounced by Athaliah, ותקרע... ותקרא, which brings to mind the double sound of רע ("bad").

The plot takes place in two locations: the House of YHWH and the palace. This axis is metaphoric. The reader learns that the divine owner of the temple (YHWH), not the usurper, establishes who will sit in the palace. Athaliah, who sought to destroy the Davidic royal line and trusted the strength of her reign in the royal palace, is to be defeated by the child who found shelter in the House of God. V. 19, "... and they led the king down (וירידו) from the House of YHWH. They entered the palace through the Gate of the Guards, and he sat upon the royal throne". The House of YHWH is metaphorically higher than the palace, and the man who trusted its asylum ultimately is the one to govern the palace.

The author wrote the story in a way that clarifies the identity of the legitimate king. The designations "the king", "the son of the king", and "the daughter of the king" are reserved for the royal line. Jehoash always carries the designations "the king" and "the son of the king", whereas Athaliah is never called by a royal title. The author only states that she "ruled the country" (v. 3). Moreover, the words "people" (עם) and "people of the land" (עם הארץ) are mentioned frequently, particularly in the last part of the story (v. 17-20), to emphasize that Jehoash's coronation was supported by both god and people.

The Post-Exilic Date of the Athaliah-Jehoash Story

Scholars agree that the Athaliah-Jehoash story includes certain late expressions and ideologies but treat them as late insertions to the original monarchical story. I will discuss these late elements in the quest of showing that they indicate the date of the story's written composition.

The most obvious post-exilic elements are the priestly linguistic features and ideology that appear in the story. Christoph Levin discussed these linguistic features and concepts in detail and attributed them to the “priesterliche Bearbeitung” of the original story (v. 3a, 4aßba², 7, 9, 11a, 13b, 15a, 19a).²⁰ However, Burke Long demonstrated that priestly terminology and ideology appears in all parts of the story and are not limited to these verses.²¹ Thus, Jehoiada, the priest, initiates the rebellion; instructs the guard how to deploy before and after the rebellion; organizes the coronation and enthrones the young king; orders the execution of Athaliah;²² concludes the covenant; and arranges the triumphal procession of the king to his seat in the palace. The leading role of the priest in the affairs of the kingdom fits the positions of the High Priest in the Second Temple Period, not the reality of the monarchical period.

Furthermore, the rebellion and coronation take place in the sacred precinct, and the temple and royal guard as described in the story have all the characteristics of the Levite guard established around the Tent of Meeting in the Sinai desert (Num 1:53; 3:5-7, 10; 18:3, 7).²³ The insignia of the young king (the diadem and testimony) is directly associated with Aaron investiture (Exod 29:5-8; Lev 8:6-12). Moreover, the priestly purity of the temple is emphasized by both the avoidance of its area as the site for Athaliah's execution (v. 15) and the destruction of the House of Baal and its altars (v. 18). Evidently, priestly ideology and terminology comprise the keys for establishing the *sitz im Leben* of the story.²⁴

²⁰ Levin, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 29-57. See also Würthwein, op. cit. (above, n. 5), p. 344-351; Barré, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 23-29, 120-124, 128-130.

²¹ Long, op. cit. (above, n. 3 - 1991), p. 147-153; idem, (above, n. 3 - 1995), p. 231-238; cf. Dutcher-Walls, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 113-127.

²² Jehoiada's order to execute Athaliah outside the temple (v. 15) brings to mind the episode in which Josephus (*Jewish Antiquities*, Book xi, 297-301) recounts the murder of Jesus, son of Joiada, by his brother Joannes, the High Priest, in the temple. Might a literary connection exist between the event that Josephus relates and Jehoiada's ban on the execution of Athaliah in the temple precinct?

²³ Long, op. cit. (above, n. 3 - 1995), p. 234, 238.

²⁴ Long, op. cit. (above, n. 3 - 1995), p. 236-238.

Some additional elements in Chapter 11 also indicate a late date of composition. As demonstrated long ago, the concept of covenant (ברית) of the people of Israel with God was born by the Deuteronomic movement in the seventh century BCE. The idea of covenant plays a central role in the Book of Deuteronomy and in the Deuteronomistic History.²⁵ It was borrowed from the Neo-Assyrian concept of *adê*, in which the Assyrian king established his relations with his subjects and vassal states.²⁶ The covenant ideology appears in biblical literature that was written since the seventh century BCE onward. Hence, the seventh century marks the earliest possible date for the Athaliah-Jehoash story. Furthermore, whereas in the monarchical period the king conducts the covenant with the people (2 Kgs 23:1-3), as was the custom throughout the ancient near East, in our story the priest presides over the covenant and conducts it between God, the king, and the people (v. 17). The role of the priest in the covenant fits a post-exilic rather than monarchical date for the text.

As noted above, Carian mercenaries served in Egypt and the Levant from the seventh century BCE onward.²⁷ The number of Carian mercenaries increased considerably in the sixth-fifth centuries, and they became the backbone of the Egyptian army. Indeed, service of mercenaries of western origin in the army of

²⁵ For a review of scholarly discussions about the origin and age of the term ברית, see L. Perlitt, *Bundestheologie im Alten Testament*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 1969; M. Weinfeld, "berith", in G.J. Botterweck, H. Ringgren (eds.), *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* II, Grand Rapids 1975, p. 253-279; K. Koch, *Vertrag, Treueid und Bund. Studien zur Rezeption des altorientalischen Vertragsrechts im Deuteronomium und zur Ausbildung der Bundestheologie im Alten Testament* (BZAW 383), Berlin, New York 2008, 106-326, with earlier literature.

²⁶ For the Assyrian concept of *adê*, see H. Tadmor, "Treaty and Oath in the Ancient Near East", in G.M. Tucker, D.A. Knight (eds.), *Humanizing America's Iconic Book*, Chico 1982, p. 127-152; S. Parpola, K. Watanabe, *Neo-Assyrian Treaties and Loyalty Oaths* (SAA II), Helsinki 1988; Koch, op. cit., p. 19-105, with earlier literature; K. Radner, "Assyrische *ṭuppi adê* als Vorbild für Deuteronomium 28,20-44?", in M. Witte, K. Schmid, D. Prechel, J.C. Gertz (eds.), *Die deuteronomistischen Geschichtswerke. Redaktions- und religionsgeschichtliche Perspektiven zur "Deuteronomismus"-Diskussion in Tora und Vorderen Propheten* (BZAW 365), Berlin, New York, 2006, p. 351-378.

²⁷ See above, note 8.

Judah is known from the Arad letters of the early sixth century BCE,²⁸ but these mercenaries are called “Kittiyim”, not Carians.²⁹ Clearly, the ostensible service of Carians mercenaries at the palace and temple of Jerusalem is anachronistic, reflecting the reality of the author’s time; that is, the post-exilic period.

The ‘Library’ Available to the Story’s Author

I suggest that the Athaliah-Jehoash story is a post-exilic work composed on the basis of earlier biblical and extra-biblical stories and the creative imagination of its author. It was written as the Judahite parallel story to that of Jehu’s rebellion. The Jehu story describes the annihilation of the Omrides and the uprooting of their foreign cult and culture, and the Athaliah-Jehoash story recounts how the Omride queen and her foreign cult were similarly uprooted from the Kingdom of Judah.

The relation of the two stories in Chapters 9-10 and 11 may serve as a point of departure for discussing the issue of sources. Some obvious similarities exist between the two stories, which are usually interpreted as the result of resemblance of theme and date of composition.³⁰ Lloyd Barré even suggested that the two stories were composed as a unified literary entity.³¹ But Levin correctly observed that they differ in many respects and were composed by different authors with different themes and ideologies.³² Moreover, the priestly terminology and ideology, which is so prominent in Chapter 11, are missing from Chapters 9-10.

The following similarities exist in the details of the two stories:

1. Both relate a successful rebellion against a ruler, terminating with his death and replacement by a new ruler.

²⁸ N. Na’aman, “Textual and Historical Notes on Eliashib’s Archive from Arad”, *Tel Aviv* 38 (2011), 83-93, with earlier literature.

²⁹ Although their name is derived from the city of Kition (Kty), the designation Kittiyim refers to people from a vast region and not Cyprus alone. See P.-E. Dion, “Les KTYM de Tel Arad: Grecs ou Phéniciens”, *RB* 99 (1992), 70-97.

³⁰ See Hoffmann, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 104-106.

³¹ Barré, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 4-98.

³² Levin, op. cit. (above, n. 2), p. 80-82.

2. Two queens – Jezebel and Athaliah – play a central role in the plots.

3. Jezebel is trampled by Jehu's horses and Athaliah is put to death after she entered the Horse Entrance.

4. The two stories present two pairs, the House of YHWH – the House of Baal and the priest of YHWH – the priest of Baal, and describe cult purification events culminating with the destruction of the foreign temple and the elimination of the cult of Baal.

How should we evaluate the similarities between the two stories? Note that the elimination of the cult of Baal and the destruction of his temple is central in both the history of the Omrides (1 Kgs 16:30-33; 22:53-54; 2 Kgs 3:2) and the story of Jehu's rebellion (Chapters 9-10), but is alien to the story of usurpation in Chapter 11; hence the assumption that the author of the Athaliah-Jehoash story borrowed the cult reform from the Jehu story. I consider this and other similarities to be best explained as the borrowing of the above-enumerated common elements from the Jehu story and their implantation into the Athaliah narrative. The author of Chapter 11 modeled the introduction of his story as the direct outcome of the events related in Chapters 9-10, designed some details in the story he wrote to fit those of the Jehu story, and inserted his story in its present place. Thus, the story of Jehu's rebellion, which relates the murder of Athaliah's son (2 Kgs 9:27-28) and the annihilation of the rest of her family (10:12-14), forms the background for her usurpation of the throne of Judah.

In what follows, I enumerate additional biblical stories that the author of Chapter 11 might have used for his composition.

1. The six years of Athaliah's reign and the rebellion that broke out in the seventh year is based on the opening verse to the reign of Jehoash (2 Kgs 12:1), which states that he was seven years old when he became king.

2. The figure of the priest Jehoiada was borrowed from the story of the temple restoration (12:7).

3. Certain elements in the history of Jehoash are borrowed from the history of Josiah. They include the support of the people of the land in the election of the young kings (2 Kgs 21:24; cf. 11:14) and the conclusion of a covenant (23:1-3; cf. 11:17), which is

followed by cult reform (23:4-20; cf. 11:17). The covenant and reform comprise central elements in the account of Josiah's reign, but are secondary in Jehoash's history and were certainly borrowed from the latter's history.

4. The detail that Jehoiada gave the captains of the hundreds "the spears and quivers (שלטים) of King David that were in the House of YHWH" (v. 10) is borrowed from 2 Sam 8:7, where it is stated that David took as booty the golden quivers (שלטי הזהב) of Hadadezer's servants, brought them to Jerusalem, and dedicated them to YHWH (8:11).

5. The main contours of the description of Jehoash's coronation (2 Kgs 11:12, 14) resemble those of Solomon's anointment (1 Kings 1:38-40), although the terminology used in the two accounts is different.

The author of the story was probably a priest who lived in Jerusalem in the Second Temple period. As the priest was at that time the leading figure in the community of the returnees, the author set the stage of the drama in the temple and described a priest as the hero of the story he composed. The author further applied the priestly terminology, concepts, and ideology current at his time. Thus, the correct determination of the date, social background, and ideology of the story fully explains its contents and makes all theories of its growth in stages over the course of time gratuitous.

Athaliah and Clytemnestra

Was the author of the Athaliah-Jehoash story perhaps influenced by any other source? With all due caution, I suggest looking at Greek literary works for another potential source of inspiration.

The proposition that Greek works might have influenced biblical historiographical compositions is not new in biblical research; indeed, various suggestions have been made over the years.³³

³³ For a survey of the history of such research, see recently K. Spronk, "Comparing the Book of Judges to Greek Literature", in M.C.A. Korpel, L.L. Grabbe

Leaving aside the stories of the Pentateuch, I will present some examples of episodes included in books of Early Prophets (Joshua-2 Kings) that scholars have compared to Greek historical and literary works.

Moshe Weinfeld has drawn comparisons between descriptions of settlement in Greece and in Israel and pointed out certain common features. Among the comparisons he offers is the similarity between biblical "establishment traditions" in the land and the founding stories (*ktisis*) that were widespread in pre-classical Greece.³⁴ Alexander Rofé has discussed the similarity between Greece and Israel with regard to the priestly law of Cities of Refuge.³⁵ Klaas Spronk recently presented a summarized list of similarities that scholars offered between stories of the Book of Judges and Greek literature.³⁶ Several Greek parallels have been offered to some episodes that appear in the "Appendix" of the Book of Samuel (2 Sam 21-24). Among these are the episode of Rizpah that is included in the story of David and the Gibeonites (2 Sam 21:10);³⁷ David splitting the water that the three elite warriors

(eds.), *Open-mindedness in the Bible and Beyond: A Volume of Studies in Honour of Bob Becking* (LHB/OTS 616), London 2015, p. 261-271, with earlier literature; T. Römer, "The Hebrew Bible and Greek Philosophy and Mythology – Some Case Studies", *Semitica* 57 (2015), p. 185-193.

³⁴ M. Weinfeld, "The Emergence of the Deuteronomistic Movement: The Historical Antecedents", in N. Lohfink (ed.), *Das Deuteronomium: Entstehung, Gestalt und Botschaft*, Leuven 1985, p. 76-83; idem, "The Pattern of the Israelite Settlement in Canaan", *VTS* 40 (1988), p. 270-283; idem, "Historical Facts behind the Israelite Settlement Pattern", *VT* 38 (1988), p. 324-332; idem, "The Promise to the Patriarchs and Its Realization. An Analysis of Foundation Stories", in M. Heltzer and E. Lipiński (eds.), *Society and Economy in the Eastern Mediterranean (c. 1500-1000 B.C.)* (OLA 23), Leuven 1988, p. 353-369.

³⁵ A. Rofé, "The History of the Cities of Refuge", *Scripta Hierosolymitana* 31 (1986), p. 205-239.

³⁶ Spronk, op. cit. (above, n. 33), p. 261-266, with earlier literature. For Jotham's fable and the fables of Aesop, see P. Guillaume, *Waiting for Josiah*, London, New York 2004, p. 56-64; Römer, op. cit. (above, n. 33), p. 200-202.

³⁷ E.C. Miescher, "Und Rizpa nahm den Sack". *Trauer als Widerstand. Eine kaum bekannte Heldin der hebräischen Bibel*, Berlin 2008, p. 125-144, with earlier literature in p. 136-139.

brought from the well of Bethlehem (23:14-17),³⁸ and the pattern of David's thirty elite warriors (23:8-39).³⁹ Finally, Klaus-Peter Adam drew attention to elements common the story of Saul in 1 Sam 14:24-46 and Greek drama.⁴⁰ To date, no Greek parallel has been offered for stories appearing in the Book of Kings.

Of particular importance for my study are the comparisons made between women depicted in biblical stories and those appearing in classical Greek literature. Thomas Römer noted that the closest parallels to the story of Jephthah's daughter (Judg 11:30-40) can be found in the tragedy of Iphigenia, the daughter of Agamemnon –especially in the way it is described in the works of Euripides. In this light, he posited that the author of the biblical story knew the Iphigenia story and used it in shaping his work.⁴¹ Elizabeth Miescher proposed that the description of Rizpah daughter of Aia, who protected the exposed corpses of her children against birds and beasts (2 Sam 21:10), was drawn from the Greek story of Antigone.⁴² Miescher compared the two epi-

³⁸ R. Gnuse, "Spilt Water – Tales of David (2Sam 23,13-17) and Alexander (Arrian, *Anabasis of Alexander* 6.26.1-3)", *SJOT* 12/2 (1998), p. 233-248.

³⁹ H.-P. Mathys, "Das Alte Testament – ein hellenistisches Buch", in U. Hübner, E.A. Knauf (eds.), *Kein Land für sich allein. Studien zum Kulturkontakt in Kanaan, Israel/Palästina und Ebirñari für Manfred Weippert zum 65. Geburtstag* (OBO 186), Freiburg, Göttingen 2002, p. 282-284; idem, "Anmerkungen zu 2 Sam 24", in F. Hartenstein, M. Pietsch (eds.), "Sieben Augen auf einem Stein" (Sach 3,9). *Studien zur Literatur des Zweiten Tempels. Festschrift für Ina Willi-Plein zum 65. Geburtstag*, Neukirchen-Vluyn 2007, p. 230. Needless to say, the original list of elite warriors and their deeds (possibly with the exception of the episode of the drawing of water from the well of Bethlehem) is based on an old source – as indicated by the warriors' names and locations. This old list was probably worked and integrated into the "Appendix" in the post-exilic period.

⁴⁰ K.-P. Adam, "Saul as a Tragic Hero. Greek Drama and Its Influence on Hebrew Scripture in 1 Samuel 14,24-46 (10,8; 13,7-13a; 10,17-27)", in A.G. Auld, E. Eynikel (eds.), *For and Against David. Story and History in the Books of Samuel* (BETL), Leuven 2010, p. 123-183.

⁴¹ T.C. Römer, "Why Would the Deuteronomists Tell about the Sacrifice of Jephthah's Daughter", *SJOT* 77 (1998), p. 27-38; idem, op. cit. (above, n. 33), p. 196-199; Adam, op. cit. (above, n. 40), p. 143-147. For criticism, see W. Gross, *Richter, übersetzt und ausgelegt* (HTKAT), Freiburg 2009, p. 601.

⁴² Miescher, op. cit. (above, n. 37), p. 128-136, 140-141.

sodes and noted the common features as well as the fundamental differences between them.⁴³

The search for a Greek model for the figure of Athaliah is encouraged by the dramatic nature of the story as a whole and the "Greek-like" characteristics of her figure. Following the murder of her son (King Ahaziah), Athaliah usurped the throne and mercilessly murdered all the offspring of the House of David. The story neither supplies an explanation for the murderous act (except for the bare passion for power) nor clarifies what her legitimation for the throne of Judah was. The bloodthirsty, unscrupulous figure of Athaliah is unique in the Bible, hence beckoning a search for a non-biblical source of inspiration for her literary image.

The figure that immediately comes to mind is that of Clytemnestra, who is known from several Greek classical works. In this mythology, she and her lover Aegisthus murdered her husband Agamemnon and his captive Cassandra, as well as Agamemnon's followers who came with him from Troy. Electra, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, helped her brother Orestes escape from the murder. Clytemnestra and Aegisthus held the throne for some years until Orestes grew up, killed the two usurpers, and ascended the throne of his father.

The following are the Greek works available for comparison:

1. The lost epic poem *Nostoi* (*Returns*), which might have been the source of the *Odyssey* treatment of the story.⁴⁴
2. The *Odyssey* of Homer (late eighth or early seventh century BCE).
3. A fragment of the pseudo-Hesiodic *Catalogue of Women* (late seventh or early sixth century BCE).⁴⁵
4. The fragments of Stesichorus' *Oresteia* (c. 550 BCE).⁴⁶

⁴³ Miescher, op. cit., p. 134-136.

⁴⁴ For the *Nostoi*, see M.L. West (ed.), *Greek Epic Fragments from the Seventh to the Fifth Centuries BC* (Loeb Classical Library 497), Cambridge, Mass., London 2003, p. 17-18, 154-157.

⁴⁵ G.W. Most (ed.), *Hesiod II. The Shield, Catalogue of Women, Other Fragments* (Loeb Classical Library 503), Cambridge, Mass., London 2007, p. 66-71.

⁴⁶ For Stesichorus' fragments of the *Oresteia*, see D.A. Campbell (ed.), *Greek Lyric III: Stesichorus, Ibycus, Simonides, and Others* (Loeb Classical Library 476), Cambridge, Mass, London 1991, p. 126-133.

5. *Pythian Ode* 11 of Pindar (474 BCE).⁴⁷

6. *The Oresteia* of Aeschylus (458 BCE).

The main problem in conducting the comparison is that the Greek story has several versions written at different periods, each differing in various details from the others. Moreover, they differ in their length. Three sources are extremely fragmentary (*the Returns*, *the Catalogue of Women* and the work of Stesichorus); another covers only segments of the complete story (that of Pindar); the fifth appears in different parts of an elaborate long epic work (Homer's *Odyssey*); whereas the sixth is long and entirely dedicated to the subject (Aeschylus' *Oresteia*). As the part of the biblical story that deals with Athaliah is short and supplies only few details for comparison, it is impossible to determine which version of the Greek story the author of the Athaliah story might have heard and used for his work. I thus avoid identifying a specific version of the Greek story as the text for comparison and compare the limited numbers of relevant details appearing in the Athaliah story to the available versions of these six works.

A general resemblance exists between the plots of the Athaliah and Jehoash story, on the one hand, and the Greek legend, on the other. To demonstrate the similarity, I juxtapose the two plots:

Athaliah

1. A death scene comprises the story's background: the murder of Ahaziah, the King of Judah and son of Athaliah.
2. Judah's royal family is murdered and the throne is usurped.
3. Jehoash, the legitimate heir to the throne, is rescued by his aunt, Jehosheba, and hidden in the temple.

Clytemnestra

1. A death scene comprises the story's background: Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia.
2. Agamemnon and all his followers are murdered and the throne is usurped.
3. Orestes, the legitimate heir to the throne, is saved by his sister, Electra, and escapes to another country.

⁴⁷ For translations, see R. Lattimore (ed.), *The Odes of Pindar* (2nd edition), Chicago, London 1976, p. 81-84; A. Verity (ed.), *Pindar: The Complete Odes*, (Oxford World's Classics), Oxford 2007, p. 73-75. For discussion, see J.H. Finley, *Pindar and Aeschylus* (Martin Classical Literature 14), Cambridge, Mass 1966, p. 160-166.

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| <p>4. The young heir's nurse moves with him to the temple.</p> <p>5. Jehoiada organizes rebellion in order to instate the legitimate heir to the throne.</p> <p>6. The conspiracy succeeds and the usurper is killed.</p> <p>7. The legitimate heir, who is still a young boy, is crowned on the throne.</p> | <p>4. The young heir's nurse takes an active part in the plot (as detailed below).</p> <p>5. Orestes organizes the conspiracy to kill the usurpers and take the throne.</p> <p>6. The conspiracy succeeds and the usurpers are killed.</p> <p>7. According to Homer, after Clytemnestra's murder, Orestes start reigning on his father's throne</p> |
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Two death scenes form the background of the two plots: Jehu's murder of the King of Judah and his brothers and Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to Artemis (though, according to some works, Artemis saved Iphigenia, and in her place a hind, a bear, or a calf was sacrificed).⁴⁸ The death scenes drive the murderous reactions of the two royal ladies: Athaliah tried to eliminate the line of David by murdering all its members and usurping the throne; Clytemnestra (with the help of Aegysthus) murdered Agamemnon (and Cassandra), pretending that her motif is revenge, and she and her lover took the throne. During the reigns of the usurpers, the legitimate heir, Jehoash, hid in the temple; and according to Aeschylus, Agamemnon's heir Orestes stayed in the court of the King of Phocis.

The Athaliah story and the *Odyssey* specify the length of the usurpers' reign as follows:

He was in hiding ... for six years, while Athaliah ruled the country. Now in the seventh year, Jehoiada ... (2 Kgs 11:3-4).

Seven years Aegisthus was lord in golden Mycenae, but in the eighth the evil came on him when great Orestes came back... (*Odyssey* iii, 304-310).

⁴⁸ C. Sourvinou-Inwood, "Iphigenia", in S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth (eds.), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* (3rd edition), Oxford and New York 1996, p. 765b-766a, with earlier literature.

Whereas Jehoash's nurse is a passive figure, Orestes' nurse plays an active role in the plot. According to Pindar (*Pyth.* 11, 17), the nurse (Arsinoe) rescued the boy when Agamemnon was killed; and according to Aeschylus, she helped Orestes when he returned.⁴⁹

Notably, this discussion aims to show the maximal points of contact between the two plots and deliberately ignores the many differences. After all, the scopes of the biblical and Greek works are entirely different, making the search for narrative differences useless. What matters for the comparison is the dramatic tone of the biblical story, the general outlines of similarity of the plots, and the few points of contact. In light of these similarities, I posit that the priestly author of the Athaliah-Jehoash story heard the Greek story in oral form; he adopted its dramatic tone, some outlines of its plot, and a few significant details; and he composed a story that fits the messages he wanted to deliver to his Judahite audience. He shaped the figure of the evil queen in line with his Greek source, made the priest the positive hero, used the contemporary priestly language, and integrated various priestly ideological ideas into his work.

The Athaliah-Jehoash Story in Historical Perspectives

I will open the historical discussion with a short comment on the contribution of the above analysis to the debate over the relations of the Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles, and then examine the historicity of the Athaliah-Jehoash story.

For many years, scholars agreed that Samuel-Kings are early historical compositions and that the Chronicler extensively developed and expanded the early works he received. This scholarly consensus was interrupted when Graeme Auld boldly posited that the shared text of Samuel-Kings and Chronicles antedated the

⁴⁹ For discussion of the role of the nurse, see L. Swift, "Stesichorus on Stage", in P.J. Finnglass and A. Kelly (eds.), *Stesichorus in Context*, Cambridge 2015, p. 128-129.

composition of both Samuel-Kings and Chronicles.⁵⁰ According to his hypothesis, the shared text, which was probably written during the exilic period, was subsequently worked on by two different scribal schools, which produced the Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles. Although the majority of scholars dismissed this hypothesis and supported the priority of Samuel-Kings over Chronicles, a number of scholars followed Auld and added various arguments in support of his proposition.⁵¹

I strongly endorse the commonly accepted opinion that the Deuteronomistic composition of Samuel-Kings is the oldest and deserves full privilege when compared to Chronicles;⁵² however, this discussion lies beyond the scope of the present paper.⁵³ Anyhow, my suggestion that the Athaliah-Jehoash story is post-Deuteronomistic contradicts the assumption that a hypothetical common source of Kings and Chronicles antedated the composition of the Book of Kings.⁵⁴ The story was inserted into Kings in

⁵⁰ A.G. Auld, *Kings without Privilege. David and Moses in the Story of the Bible's Kings*, Edinburgh 1994; idem, *Samuel at the Threshold. Selected Works of Graeme Auld*, Aldershot, Burlington 2004; idem, "The Shaping of Israelite History in Samuel and Kings", *RB* 121 (2014), 195-216, with earlier literature.

⁵¹ See e.g., R. Rezetko, "Dating Biblical Hebrew: Evidence from Samuel-Kings and Chronicles", in I. Young (ed.), *Biblical Hebrew. Studies in Chronology and Typology* (JSOTSup 369), London 2003, p. 215-250; idem, *Sources and Revision in the Narratives of David's Transfer of the Ark. Text, Language, and Story in 2 Samuel 6 and 1 Chronicles 13, 15-16* (LHB/OTS 470), New York, London 2007; idem, "Late Common Nouns in the Book of Chronicles", in R. Rezetko, T.H. Lim, B. Aucker (eds.), *Reflection and Refraction. Studies in Biblical Historiography in Honour of A. Graeme Auld* (VTS 113), Leiden 2006, p. 379-417; R.F. Person, *The Deuteronomistic History and the Book of Chronicles. Scribal Works in an Oral World* (Ancient Israel and Its Literature 6), Atlanta 2010.

⁵² The post-Deuteronomistic additions to Samuel-Kings blurred the obvious priority of these two historiographical works over that of the Chronicles. See U. Becker, H. Bezzel, *Recreating the Relecture? The Question of (Post)Chronistic Influence in the Latest Redactions of the Books of Samuel* (FAT II), Tübingen 2014.

⁵³ Years ago, I presented evidence that the List of Levitical cities in Joshua 21 antedated the parallel list in 1 Chronicles 6. See N. Na'aman, *Borders and Districts in Biblical Historiography. Seven Studies in Biblical Geographical Lists* (Jerusalem Biblical Studies 4), Jerusalem 1986, p. 209-216

⁵⁴ The "Appendix" of the Book of Samuel (2 Sam 21-24) is another case in point. Hans-Peter Mathys demonstrated that the "Appendix" as a literary unit was composed no earlier than the post-exilic period and that at least part of it

the post-exilic period, and when the Chronicler composed his book, he reworked it within the new historical work he wrote.

As suggested above, the original continuity between the description of the murder and burial of Ahaziah (2 Kgs 9:27-28) and the introductory verses to the history of his son Jehoash (2 Kgs 12:1-2) indicates that the information delivered in these verses comprises part of the original Book of Kings. Liverani suggested that the forty years attributed in the text to Jehoash is a round, non-historical number.⁵⁵ However, Jehoash's forty years of reign does not differ from all other reign lengths mentioned in the introductions to the histories of the kings of Israel and Judah. Athaliah's seven years of reign, on the other hand, were borrowed from the age of Jehoash when he ascended the throne and should be dismissed in discussions of the chronology of the Judahite kings.

According to the original sequence of Kings, when Ahaziah was murdered Jehoash was still a young boy, and an unknown coregent must have reigned in his name until he reached maturity. Similarly, when Amon was murdered, Josiah was also a boy (2 Kgs 21:23-24; 22:1), and a coregent must have reigned in his name. Jehoash's forty years of reign (2 Kgs 12:2) does not differ from Josiah's thirty one years of reign (22:1), and should be accepted as is.

The only reliable information about Athaliah is that she was daughter of Omri (and not Ahab)⁵⁶ and mother of Ahaziah (2 Kgs

(21:1-14; 22:1-23:1-7; 24) was written at that time. The "Appendix" thus contradicts the hypothesis that the common source of Kings and Chronicles (1 Chr 11:10-40; 20:4-8; 21) antedated the composition of Kings. See H.-P. Mathys, *Dichter und Better. Theologen aus spätalttestamentlicher Zeit* (OBO 132), Fribourg, Göttingen 1994, p. 126-164; idem, op. cit. (above, n. 39), p. 229-246, with earlier literature; Miescher, op. cit. (above n. 37), p. 141-142.

⁵⁵ Liverani, op. cit. (above, n. 17), p. 453.

⁵⁶ For discussion, see J. Begrich, "Atalija, die Tochter Omris", ZAW 53 (1935), p. 78-79; H.J. Katzenstein, "Who were the Parents of Athaliah?", IEJ 5 (1955), p. 194-197; T. Ishida, "The House of Ahab", IEJ 25 (1975), p. 135-137; E. Puech, "Athalia, fille d'Achab et la chronologie des rois d'Israel et de Juda", Salmanticensis 28 (1981), p. 117-133; D.V. Etz, "The Genealogical Relationships of Jehoram and Ahaziah, and of Ahaz and Hezekiah, Kings of Judah", JSOT 71 (1996), p. 43-49; W.B. Barrick, "Another Shaking of Jehoshaphat's Family Tree: Jehoram and

8:18, 26). In contrast, the depiction of her reign in Judah as related in Chapter 11 is legendary and should be treated with the utmost caution as historical data. The story was written in the post-exilic period; it remains unclear whether its author had heard an oral story about Athaliah that had been transmitted for hundreds of years. The story's late date of composition; its dramatic-theatrical character; its pro-priestly, propagandistic nature; and its absorption of details drawn from various biblical and Greek stories all combine to make the story unsuitable for historical discussion.

Did the Kingdom of Judah experience a severe crisis following the death of Ahaziah and the ascending of a young boy to the throne of Judah? Probably. Unfortunately, however, no historical data exists to assess this assumption. The situation in Judah after Ahaziah's death was similar to that of Judah after the murder of Amon when Josiah, his heir, was still a young boy. In neither case can we identify who ran the kingdom's affairs until the heir grew and was able to effectively rule the kingdom. Many gaps exist in our knowledge of the histories of the kingdoms of Israel and Judah in the monarchical period; the early years of reign of Jehoash and Josiah comprise just two examples of the problem of the paucity of sources that is so acute when investigating the history of the two kingdoms.

One additional point must be clarified. Chapter 11 gives the impression that Athaliah's usurpation of the throne yielded a serious threat to the continuity of the dynasty of David. The issue is more complicated, however. First, in the Tel Dan Aramaic inscription, probably erected during the reigns of Jehu in Israel and Jehoash in Judah, the Kingdom of Judah is called "House of David" (*bt dwd*). The name parallels other appellations of contemporaneous kingdoms and implies that David was regarded as the dynasty's founder.⁵⁷ Its mention in the Aramaic inscription indicates that the exclusive legitimation of David's dynasty to the throne of Judah, which was then more than one hundred years old, has

Ahaziah Once Again", VT 51 (2001), p. 9-25; R.C. Klein, "Queen Athaliah: The Daughter of Ahab or Omri?", *Jewish Bible Quarterly* 42 (2014), p. 11-20.

⁵⁷ N. Na'aman, "Beth-David in the Aramaic Stela from Tel Dan", BN 79 (1995), p. 17-24.

been widely recognized. Second, the impression the Athaliah story creates regarding the existence of a threat to the continuity of the dynasty is artificial, since Athaliah could not have been considered a legitimate heir to the throne of Judah. This historical reality is indicated by both the Deuteronomistic text of Kings, according to which Jehoash succeeded his father Ahaziah, and by analogy to Josiah, who was also a boy when ascending the throne. Threats to the rule of the designated heir might have emerged from his brothers and close relatives, who might consider themselves legitimate candidates for the throne. However, all of them belonged to the same royal dynasty, and their election does not jeopardize the principle according to which only offspring of the House of David are allowed to reign on his Jerusalemite throne.

The Serpent as a Symbol of Primeval Yahwism

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Résumé. Au delà de ses connotations péjoratives, le serpent est considéré dans la Bible comme le gardien du domaine sacré et de ses extensions : le sanctuaire, les sources d'eau, les richesses souterraines, et la terre d'Israël. De plus, l'identification du bâton de Moïse comme caducée révèle l'implication de cet animal dans l'exercice des pouvoirs divins. Plutôt qu'une influence cananéenne sur le yahwisme, l'attachement commun du serpent et de YHWH à la métallurgie traditionnellement pratiquée en sud Canaan dénote leur relation essentielle. Une continuité apparaît ainsi entre une forme primordiale, cananéenne, du yahwisme et son extension israélite. Dans ce contexte, l'exclusion du serpent de cuivre (*nehushtan*) hors du temple de Jérusalem (2 Rois 18,4) reflète une réforme du yahwisme primordial, promue par le roi Ézéchias, qui conduisit au rejet de l'un de ses symboles les plus essentiels.

Introduction

The Bible expresses two contrasting opinions about the serpent. In the first, it uses this creature as a metaphor of evil (Deut 32,33; Pss 58,5; 140,4; Job 20,16) and divine curse (Gen 3,14; Isa 59,5). It is even an enemy that YHWH vanquished in the mythical past (Isa 51,9; Ps 74,13–14) or will defeat in an eschatological future (Isa 27,1). A considerably more positive view, however, is enunciated in Ps 148,7, where the poet explicitly invites the serpents and other sea monsters to praise YHWH: “Praise YHWH from the earth, dragons (תַּנִּינִים) and all deeps (תְּהוֹמוֹת).” This psalm is not the only source that reveals such a view. In Job, too, much of YHWH’s discourse is devoted to a fantastic snake-like being called the Levia-

than (Job 40,25–41,26).¹ This animal is neither terrifying nor in conflict with YHWH; rather, its wondrous nature is evoked to magnify YHWH's successful feat of creation.² Also in Genesis 1, the first mention of *tanninim* (Gen 1,21)—a term probably evoking dragons or serpents³—has no negative connotation whatsoever. No additional allusion of negativity is offered concerning the terrestrial serpents created on the sixth day (Gen 1,25).

It is generally assumed that the disparaging view of the serpent reflects genuine Israelite theology whereas its laudatory counterpart betrays the negative Canaanite influence that the Bible so frequently denounces.⁴ Such an opinion is justified by the serpent worship that was extensively evidenced in the Ancient Near East and by continuity in representations of the serpent symbol in Canaan from the Chalcolithic period to the Persian era.⁵ It also finds explicit support in the removal of the copper serpent from the Jerusalem temple by King Hezekiah (2 Kgs 18,4). The concurrent mention of this religious reform and the destruction of high places (בָּמֹת), pillars (מַצֵּבֹת), and Asherah (2 Kgs 18,4) is classically interpreted as the elimination of an idolatrous cult of Canaanite origin.⁶ This view of the matter, however, is challenged

¹ The serpentine nature of this creature is deduced both from the Semitic root *lwy* (= to twist) and from its parallel with the Ugaritic sea-dragon monster, *Lotan*. See Christoph Uehlinger, "Leviathan," in *Dictionary of Deities, and Demons in the Bible*, eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst, Leiden, Brill, 1999, p. 511–515, p. 511.

² In Ps 104,26, the Leviathan is even mentioned as a wonder that YHWH created to "play" (לְיוֹתָן זֶה יֵצֵרֶתָ לְשִׁחֹק בּוֹ) in the depths of the sea.

³ This is revealed by the replacement of נחש in Ex 4,1–5 by תנין in the second description of the serpent/scepter transformation in Ex 7,9–10.

⁴ This conclusion is a good fit for the many biblical authors who condemn both the Canaanite religion and its influence in Israel, e.g., Ex 33,11–14; Deut 7,1–5; 20,16–18.22–26; Judg 3,5–7.

⁵ Karen R. Joines (*Serpent Symbolism in the Old Testament*, Haddonfield, Haddon Field House, 1974, p. 63) concludes that in Canaan, "The bronze serpent was a cultic symbol, and its use dated from at least the end of the Chalcolithic Age to the Persian period." This view is confirmed by Sei-jin Koh, *An Archaeological Investigation of the Snake Cult in the Southern Levant: The Chalcolithic Period Through the Iron Age*, PhD dissertation; University of Chicago, 1994, p. 110–116.

⁶ As reviewed by Heinz-Joseph Fabry ("Nehoshet," in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 9, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck; Helmer Ringgren and

by the specification, in this verse, that the copper serpent was crafted by Moses.⁷ In Num 21,8, it is even related that Moses was explicitly instructed by YHWH to make it. It seems clear to the author of Numbers that the copper serpent originally belonged to the worship of YHWH. If the author of 2 Kgs 18,4 referred to this account of the origin of the copper serpent, we may hardly assume that he condemned the serpent worship at the temple as a form of idolatry.

These preliminary observations indicate that the current approach toward the serpent symbol as evidence of residual Canaanite influence on the Israelite religion, though extensively accepted among scholars, is probably an oversimplification.⁸ In Ancient Israel, the serpent symbol may be something other than

Heinz-Joseph Fabry, transl. David E. Green; Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999, p. 378–379), many opinions about the origin of the Nehushtan have been proposed. It has been interpreted as a former Mosaic fetish, a Syro-Phoenician emblem, a foreign military emblem captured by David that became a trophy, an Egyptian symbol of royal sovereignty, an apotropaic Babylonian talisman, a Phoenician serpent staff of Eshmun, and a relic of local Canaanite fertility rites. Maciej Münnich (“The Cult of Bronze Serpents in Ancient Canaan and Israel,” *Iggud – Selected Essays in Jewish Studies* 1, 2005, p. 49*) concludes that “[...] *The bronze serpent was primarily a symbol of a deity in competition with the cult of YHWH as it moved towards monotheism.*” Marvin A. Sweeney (*Kings I & II – Commentary*, Louisville, John Knox Press, 2007, p. 403), assumes that “*The Nehushtan figure [...] is probably a typical Canaanite fertility symbol adapted to Judean religious context.*”

⁷ “He removed the high places and broke the pillars and cut down the Asherah. And he broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the people of Israel had made offerings to it – it was called Nehushtan.” The author refers here to the episode related in Num 21,8–9, where YHWH explicitly asks Moses to craft a bronze serpent. Many scholars interpret this mosaic affiliation as an attempt to integrate this worship into the Israelite tradition. In such a case, however, one may wonder why the opponents, among them the authors of 2 Kgs 18,4, mention this explanation instead of condemning this cult as Canaanite.

⁸ For instance, Heinz-Joseph Fabry (“Nahas,” in *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 9, eds. G. Johannes Botterweck; Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Joseph Fabry, transl. David E. Green, Grand Rapids, Eerdmans, 1999, p. 359) concludes that “*Nowhere in ancient Israel do we find any possibility of developing a positive attitude towards serpents, as was the case in Egypt, Greece and Italy. There was certainly never any serpent cult, as in Mesopotamia and Egypt. This—more than inclusion of serpents in Ugaritic mythology—accounts for the fact that serpents were considered cultically unclean.*”

a simple avatar of Canaanite idolatrous cults and practices that were gradually eliminated toward the end of the pre-exilic period.⁹ It may also belong to an archaic pre-Israelite cult of YHWH, defined here as *primeval yahwism*, with which the earliest stages of the Israelite religion were associated.¹⁰ This hypothesis is examined below.

The serpent as guardian of YHWH's domain

In the Bible, most positive views about the serpent are expressed through the function of this creature as a holy guardian in the celestial universe, the Garden of Eden, and the terrestrial dominion of YHWH.

Serpents as guardians of the divine council

According to Isa 6,2–4, YHWH's celestial throne is surrounded by seraphim. Isaiah describes these winged serpentine creatures¹¹ as

⁹ Koh, *Snake cult*, p. 25, 104.

¹⁰ Ron S. Hendel ("Nehushtan," in *Dictionary of Deities, and Demons in the Bible*, eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst, Leiden, Brill, 1999, p. 615–616), for example, concludes that "*The bronze snake probably belonged to the traditional repertoire of Yahwistic symbols.*" Jean de Savignac ("Les Seraphim", *Vetus Testamentum* 22, 1972, p. 332) already interprets the serpent as a figuration of YHWH (or his powers) in the popular religion of ancient Israel. Similarly, Claus Westermann (*Genesis 1–11 – A Commentary*, transl. John J. Scullion, London and Augsburg, SPCK, 1984, p. 384) rules out the possibility that the serpent simply denotes Canaanite fertility worship independent of the cult of YHWH.

¹¹ John Day, "Echoes of Baal's Seven Thunders and Lightnings in Psalms XXIX and Habakkuk III.9 and the Identity of the Seraphim in Isaiah VI," *Vetus Testamentum* 29, 1979, p. 143–151, p. 150. Othmar Keel and Christoph Uehlinger (*Gods, Goddesses and Images of God in Ancient Israel*, Minneapolis, Fortress Press, 1998, p. 273) interpret this winged serpent as a representation of the seraph, a divine creature belonging to the yahwistic sphere. See also Tallay Ornan, "Member in the Entourage of Yahweh: A Uraeus Seal From the Western Wall Plaza Excavations, Jerusalem," *Atiqot* 72, 2012, p. 15*–20*. Identification of the seraph as serpent-like winged creature is supported by its explicit mention as a serpent in

being involved in the celestial musical worship of YHWH, itself a very positive function. Furthermore, an examination of the events successively related in Isa 6,1–8 reveals that they have an additional function:

v. 1: the transport of Isaiah to YHWH's celestial palace

vv. 2–3: description of the antiphonal musical worship performed by the seraphim

v. 4: description of the spontaneous animation of gates and doors by this musical worship

v. 5: fear of Isaiah for having been transported to an unauthorized place for a mortal

vv. 6–7: a seraph purifies Isaiah and authorizes his presence in the celestial palace

v. 8: introduction of Isaiah to the divine council.

This plot clearly reveals that the seraphim also have the authority to introduce to the divine council someone normally excluded from it, such as a mortal. Such a function—guardian of the divine council and, by extension, of the divine palace—is confirmed by the explicit mention of the doors and gates in v. 4, interspersed between the description of the seraphim and the admission of Isaiah to the council. As positioned, v. 4 implies that the seraphim serve as gatekeepers who control access to the divine council.¹² A similar function of guardian of the celestial palace is attributed to the serpents in Mesopotamia.¹³ This affinity finds a parallel in the

Numbers 21:6, 8; the serpentine context of its quotation in Deut 8,15 and Isa 14,29; 30:6; and its affinity with the Egyptian Uraeus. See Savignac ("Les seraphim") and Tryggve N.D. Mettinger, "Seraphim," in *Dictionary of Deities, and Demons in the Bible*, eds. Karel van der Toorn, Bob Becking and Pieter W. van der Horst, Leiden, Brill, 1999, p. 743.

¹² The dual function of the seraphim, as gatekeepers and as singers/musicians, has a terrestrial counterpart in the Jerusalem temple, where some of the gatekeepers (the sons of Obed-Edom, 1 Chr 26,4–8) control access to the sanctuary and are also involved in musical worship (1 Chr 15,21).

¹³ The serpent-god Ningizzida is acknowledged in Mesopotamia as the guardian of the gate of the palace of Anu, the sky-god. See E. Douglas Van Buren, "The God Ningizzida," *Iraq* 1, 1943, p. 689, p. 63, 66–67; Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2000, p. 186.

general function of serpents as guardians of terrestrial sanctuaries in the Ancient Near East.¹⁴

The serpent as guardian in the Garden of Eden

Genesis 3,1 describes the serpent as the most intelligent (ערום) living being. Its function as guardian of the tree of (eternal) life and the tree of knowledge (= the secret knowledge of YHWH, intentionally hidden from mankind) confirms that this creature enjoyed a very prestigious status, at least originally. A similar function of the serpent as the guardian of secret knowledge emerges in other cultures from Antiquity.¹⁵ Instead of the wholly positive view classically encountered, however, the account in Genesis 3 describes a deviation from this guarding function of the serpent, one with dramatic consequences: the primeval sin of Adam and Eve (Gen 3,4–5) and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden (Gen 3,23–24).

This incident is generally approached as an expression of the serpent's evil nature, although scholars already noticed that such a vile dimension is not explicitly mentioned in this myth.¹⁶ Alter-

¹⁴ See Balaji Mundkur, *The Cult of the Serpent: An Interdisciplinary Survey of Its Manifestations and Origins*, Albany (NY), State of New York University Press, 1983, p. 102. Concerning serpents in Mesopotamian temples, see Douglas R. Frayne, "Naram-Suen and the Mušuššu Serpents," *Journal of American Oriental Studies* 102, 1982, p. 511–513. This function is explicitly evoked in Greece, where the Acropolis cultic complex was guarded by serpents. The temple of Delphi was also guarded by Python, a serpent-dragon defeated by Apollo, who took over the shrine.

¹⁵ In Mesopotamia, for example, the serpent-god Ningizzida is acknowledged as the guardian of the tree of knowledge (van Buren, "Ningizzida", p. 67). Also in Greece, a serpent-dragon, Ladon, prevents the access to a mysterious tree producing golden apples, whose harvest is forbidden. See Robert Graves, *Greek Myths*, London, 1958, § 132a. And exactly as in Genesis 3,22, the golden fruit of this fabulous tree is expected to provide eternal life. See Sheila R. Canby, "Dragons," in *Mythical beasts*, ed. John Cherry, London, 1995, p. 143, p. 18.

¹⁶ As noticed by Bill T. Arnold (*Genesis*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2009, p. 62), nothing in Genesis 3 promotes the association of the serpent with the evil. The connotations are rather of wisdom, protection, and knowledge. Such a positive association of the serpent with wisdom and magical

nately, the degradation of the serpent's status pursuant to the sin may distinguish the Israelite religion from almost all of its Ancient Near Eastern counterparts, in which this creature retained its prestige. Genesis 3, however, states that the serpent, unlike Adam and Eve, is expelled neither from the Garden of Eden nor even from the vicinity of the "holy trees." The only two curses that the serpent incurs are a change in its "nutrition" and perpetual enmity with Eve's progeny (Gen 3,14–15). No such enmity between the serpent and YHWH is prophesied. Thus, in the Genesis myth of creation, the serpent remains the guardian of the secret knowledge of YHWH even after the sin.

The serpent as guardian of the abyssal domain

According to Amos 9,3, a fabulous creature dwelling in the abysses, called "the serpent," receives instructions directly from YHWH: "[...] *And if they hide from my sight at the bottom of the sea, there I will command the serpent* (אֲצִוֶּה אֶת הַנָּחָשׁ), *and it shall bite them.*" The use of the verb צִוָּה (= to command, to give an order) in a divine context is generally reserved for someone who is expected to fulfill the word of YHWH (e.g., Gen 2,6; Ex 16,34) and the Torah (Lev 7,37; Num 19,2; 30,17; Deut 6,20). It is also encountered in reference to divine beings (hosts of heaven) who fulfill the will of their creator (Isa 45,12) or as an expression of YHWH's control of elements of the Universe (Isa 5,6; Pss 33,9; 78,23; Job 36,12; 37,11). In view of these semantic contexts of צִוָּה, the serpent evoked in Amos 9,3 cannot in any way be regarded as an enemy of YHWH. Rather, it should be regarded as the emissary of YHWH in the exercise of his power over the maritime realm. Such a positive view has a parallel in Ugaritic mythology, in which Yam, the sea-dragon, is called "the beloved of El" (*mdd el*).¹⁷ A similar favorable view of the abyssal serpent-dragon is evidenced twice in Mesopo-

knowledge is also emphasized by Gerhard von Rad (*Genesis - A Commentary*, transl. John H. Marks, London, SCM Press, 1961, p. 85) and by Westermann, *Genesis 1–11*, p. 237.

¹⁷ KTU 1.1 iv 20; 1.3 iii 39.

tamia, in the appellation of the Sumerian god Enki as *the black snake in the Abzu*¹⁸ and the representation of its Akkadian counterpart, Ea, as a serpent monster that inhabits the depths of the sea.¹⁹

The serpent as guardian of mineral treasures

Numbers 21,6–9 reports the mysterious episode of an attack on the Israelites by “burning serpents.” That these creatures were sent by YHWH (v. 6) again confirms their closeness with the deity. It is unlikely that such an awful serpent attack was simply provoked by the Israelites’ complaint, reported immediately before (v. 5), that they had “...left the fertile land of Egypt to die in the wilderness.” After all, they had complained similarly before (Ex 14,11–12; 16,3; Num 14,2; 16,3; 20,4) without provoking any comparable destructive divine anger.

The serpent attack occurred immediately after the Israelites had to circumvent the land of Edom from the south (Num 21,4), being denied access to this territory (Num 20,18.20–21). It is even specified, immediately before the attack, that the imposition of this arduous detour caused the Israelites to “grow impatient” (וַתִּקְצַר נַפְשׁ הָעָם בַּדֶּרֶךְ, Num 21,4). Therefore, the serpent attack appears to be a reaction to the Israelites’ attempt to shorten their journey by crossing a forbidden area belonging to the Edomites. By extension, the burning serpents sent by YHWH are guardians who defend Edom against the entrance of unauthorized persons.

Nothing is said about this forbidden area except that it is located between Mount Hor (Num 21,4) and Oboth (Num 21,10). In Num 33,41–43, however, we learn that Punon is located between these stations, prompting many scholars to assume that the ser-

¹⁸ Peeter Espak, *Ancient Near Eastern Gods Enki and Ea. Diachronical Analysis of Texts and Images from the Earliest Sources to the Neo-Sumerian Period*, PhD Dissertation; Tartu, 2006, p. 51–53.

¹⁹ Reginald C. Thompson, *The Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia* vol. 2, London, Lurzac, 1904, p. 149; E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Babylonian Legends of the Creation*, London, British Museum, 1921, p. 24–26.

pent attack occurred there.²⁰ In the early Iron Age, Punon was the greatest mining and copper production area in the Arabah Valley, which was under Edomite control.²¹ This transforms the burning serpents into guardians of the mining area. Accounting for the proximity of Punon to the Seir mountains, we may deduce that it belongs to the holy area of YHWH, which unauthorized persons were not allowed to access. The theme of serpents/dragons controlling the entrance to mining areas and guarding their mineral treasures was widespread in Antiquity.²² Exactly as in Numbers 21,

²⁰ More than a century ago, Marie-Joseph Lagrange ("L'Itinéraire des Israélites. Du pays de Gessen aux bords du Jourdain", *Revue Biblique* 9, 1900, p. 273-87, p. 284-5) specified Punon as the location of the attack of the burning serpents. Recent scholars defend this opinion. See, for example, John F.A. Sawyer, "Cain and Hephaestus. Possible Relics of Metalworking Traditions in Genesis 4," *Abr-Nahrain* 24, 1986, p. 155-66, p. 156, and Juan M. Tebes, "The 'Wisdom' of Edom," *Biblische Notizen* 143, 2009, p. 97-117, p. 108. Other scholars suggest that this story carries the memory of an incident at Timna. See Jacob Milgrom, *Numbers*, Philadelphia, The Jewish Publication Society, 1990, p. 175; James A. Charlesworth, *The Good and Evil Serpent*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2010, p. 17, 327; Hans Maneschg, *Die Erzählung von der ehernen Schlange (Num 21,4-9) in des Auslegung des frühen jüdischen Literatur*, Frankfurt am Main, Peter Lang, 1981, p. 157, and Fabry, "Nehoshet," p. 380. The latter opinion is supported mainly by the finding of an early Iron Age copper serpent at the Timna sanctuary.

²¹ Thomas E. Levy and Muhammad Najjar, "Edom and Copper – The Emergence of Ancient Israel's Rival," *Biblical Archaeological Review* 32, 2006, p. 24-37.

²² Cristiano Grottanelli, "Dragons," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 4., ed. Mircea Eliade, New York, McMillan, 1987, p. 433-434; Elmer G. Suhr, "The Griffon and the Volcano," *Folklore* 78, 1967, p. 212-224, p. 218; Joseph Fontenrose, *Python – A Study of Delphic Myth and its Origin*, New York, 1974, Biblio and Tannen, p. 387; Sidney Aufrère, *L'univers minéral dans la pensée égyptienne*, Le Caire, Institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 1991, p. 140-141; Charlesworth, *Good and evil serpent*, p. 229. Already in the nineteenth century, Ann Walbank Buckland ("The Serpent in Connection with Primitive Metallurgy," *Journal of Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 4, 1875, p. 60-61) concluded that "A large number of the old-serpent myths represent this reptile as associated in some way with precious metals and precious stones; the serpent constantly appears as the guardian of hidden treasures and the revealing of precious knowledge; whilst the deities, kings and heroes who are either symbolized by the serpent, or supposed to partake its nature, are commonly described as the pioneers of civilization and the instructors of mankind in the arts of agriculture and mining."

this function reflects the strict denial of access to mining areas and mineral treasures to all but authorized persons.²³

The serpent as guardian of Israel

In Antiquity, the protective function of the serpent was not restricted to the holy domain of the deity. In Egypt, for example, the uraeus is explicitly approached as the protector of the king and, through this function, of the entire kingdom.²⁴ More generally, the domestic cult of the serpent widely observed in Antiquity (in which the serpent symbolized protection, health, and prosperity²⁵) should be interpreted as an extension of the serpent's role as guardian of the holy domains.

A similar domestic extension of the protective function of the serpent is attested in Eccl 10,8: "*He who digs a pit will fall into it, and a serpent will bite him who breaks through a wall.*" Here, this creature is explicitly mentioned as the guardian of private property. Even more, the parallel between the two parts of the verse transforms him into an agent of divine justice. Beyond this domestic dimension, the serpent served a protective function for Israel as a whole. This is revealed through the metaphoric identification of Dan as a serpent-guardian who enjoins invading armies against entering Israel from the north: "*Dan shall be a serpent (שָׁרָף) in the*

²³ In ancient mythologies, the possession of these mining areas became possible only after the dragon who obstructs their access was slain. This is attested to in Greek mythology, in which the killing of the dragon of the Hesperides by Heracles gives the Greeks access to the mineral treasures of southern Iberia. See Graves, *Greek myths*, § 132.

²⁴ Barbara Watterson, *Gods of Ancient Egypt*, Stroud, Surrey, 1999, p. 129–131; Wendy R.J. Golding, *Perceptions of the Serpent in the Ancient Near East: Its Bronze Age role in Apotropaic Magic, Healing and Protection*, MA Thesis; University of South Africa, 2013, p. 195–197.

²⁵ Rein Ferwerda, "Le serpent, le noeud d'Hercule et le caducée d'Hermès: sur un passage orphique chez Athénagore", *Numen* 20, 1973, p. 104–115, p. 107; Charlesworth, *Good and evil serpent*, p. 230–231.

way, a viper (שָׁפִירָן) by the path, that bites the horse's heels so that his rider falls backward" (Gen 49,17).²⁶

In Genesis 49, the likening of Dan to a protective serpent (v. 17) is immediately followed by a supplication to YHWH for the deliverance of Israel from enemies/invasers: "For your salvation I wait, YHWH" (Gen 49,18). Such an entreaty is encountered nowhere else in Jacob's blessing of the tribes. Its insertion here apparently reflects the Biblical author's opinion that the attack on Israel's enemies by the serpent is an act of divine salvation. Here again, Genesis treats the serpent as YHWH's privileged agent, his emissary who protects Israel in his name.

The vector of supernatural powers

In Exodus, most of Moses' wonders are performed with the help of his staff (מִטָּה). If so, this instrument is deeply implicated in the conveyance of supernatural powers. It is, however, not unique. According to Ex 8,12–13, Aaron has a similar staff by which he, too, performs wonders in the name of YHWH.

The commonality of the two scepters is their capacity to metamorphose spontaneously into a serpent (Ex 4,1–5 and Ex 7,9–10 for Moses and Aaron, respectively). This property is explicitly noted when YHWH first sends Moses to perform a wonder with its help: "Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent" (Ex 7,15). This invites us to examine the extent to which the wonders performed through this artifact are closely related to the powers traditionally attributed to the serpent in the Ancient Near East.

²⁶ This interpretation is proposed by Charlesworth (*Good and evil serpent*), who concludes (p. 231) that "Dan is clearly portrayed as the serpent that guards the tribes of Israel." The aptness of the metaphor is confirmed by the specific mention of invading northern enemies that enter Israel from Dan with horses and cavalry, as reported in Jer 8,16: "The snorting of their horses is heard from Dan; at the sound of the neighing of their stallions the whole land quakes. They come and devour the land and all that fills it, the city and those who dwell in it."

Drinking water

With their staffs, Moses and Aaron deprive the Egyptians of all their sources of drinking water: “*the Nile, the rivers, and all the pools and ponds of water*” (Ex 7,17–19). By the help of the same staff, the Israelites enjoy abundant fresh water in the wilderness (Ex 17,5–6). Both wonders demonstrate the power of this artifact to control the supply of potable water.²⁷

In the Ancient Near East, drinking water was closely related to the serpent symbol, as evidenced in the extensive association of serpent worship with rivers, springs, and wells in Elam, Mesopotamia, and the Mediterranean world.²⁸ The same is attested in Canaan through the important cult of serpent at Dan, where the Jordan River has its main sources.²⁹ The serpent-drinking water nexus recurred in Ancient Israel, as indicated in the appellation of the Shiloah, Jerusalem’s main water source, as *Gihon* (serpent’s belly) (1 Kgs 1,33.38.45), and by calling another source near Jerusalem the Dragon’s Spring (עֵין הַתַּנִּין, see Neh 2,13). The connection is confirmed by the recurrence of the name *Gihon* as one of

²⁷ An explicit relationship between the wonders is stressed in Ex 17,5–6: “*And YHWH said to Moses: Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink [...].*”

²⁸ The serpent association with springing water is extensively acknowledged in the Ancient Near East. See Carl Hentze and Joyce Adams, “*Gods and Drinking Serpents*,” *History of Religions* 4, 1965, p. 179–208; Joines, *Serpent symbolism*, p. 68–72. Exactly the same symbolism is encountered in ancient Greece (Hentze and Adams, “*Gods and drinking serpents*,” p. 203; Fontenrose, *Python*, p. 545, 549), in India (Patrizia Granziera, “*The Indo-Mediterranean Caduceus, the Worship of the Tree, the Serpent and the Mother Goddess in the South of India*,” *Comparative studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 30, 2010, p. 610–620, p. 619); and even in China (Georges D. Hornblower, “*Early Dragon Forms*,” *Man* 84–85, 1933, p. 79–87). A century ago, Charles F. Oldham (*The Sun and the Serpent. A Contribution to History of the Serpent Worship*, London, Archibald Constable, 1905, p. 52) already noticed that “[...] *the serpent appear to have been everywhere connected with the sea, rivers and lakes, and in fact with the waters generally.*”

²⁹ Koh, *Snake cult*, p. 12. According to Charlesworth (*Good and Evil Serpent*, p. 77), continuity in the serpent cult is attested at Dan between the Canaanite and Israelite periods.

the four streams flowing from the Garden of Eden (Gen 2,11–14). If so, control of the supply of drinking water via the staff is closely related to the “serpentine” nature of this implement.

Rain/hail

With the help of his scepter, Moses unleashes a violent hailstorm upon the entirety of Egypt (Ex 9,22–24). According to Job (Job 38,22–23), hail accumulates in heavenly reservoirs (clouds) and falls to earth after they suddenly open. The serpentine dimension of Moses’ wonder is not explicitly mentioned in Exodus, but we learn that his scepter had the power to provoke thunderbolts together with hail: “*fire flashing continually in the midst of the hail*” (וְאֵשׁ מִתְּלַקְחַת בְּתוֹךְ הַבָּרָד, Ex 9, 24). Mesopotamian literary sources interpret this thunderbolt as a fiery dragon that has the power to open the celestial receptacles (= clouds) and release their rain and/or hail.³⁰ We may therefore conclude that the wonder performed through the medium of Moses’ scepter is again dependent on its ability to transform itself into a fiery dragon that opens the heavenly reservoirs of rain, hail, and snow.

Cosmogonic powers

In Genesis cosmogony, earth is totally submerged in water at first. Dry land emerges only on the third day of creation, after the “gathering of all the waters” in one place, i.e., the sea (Gen 1,9–10). A similar process, limited both in scale and time, is related in Exodus through the miracle of the Sea. Here too, a small piece of dry land emerged temporarily due to the local retreat of the waters (Ex 14,21). The cosmogonic dimension of this miracle is confirmed by the expression “the waters were divided” (וַיִּבְקְעוּ הַמַּיִם),

³⁰ Alberto R.W. Green (*The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East*, Winona Lake, Eisenbrauns, 2003, p. 32) notes “[...] a continuing tradition from the Akkadian era of the Storm-God with a triple thunderbolt symbol seated on the back of a leonine dragon. In these scenes, there is an unmistakable similarity between the triple thunderbolt and the flames protruding from the mouth of the dragon [...]”

which has a parallel in the account of the creation of dry land in Prov 3,19–20: “YHWH by wisdom founded the earth; by understanding he established the heavens; by his knowledge the deeps broke open (תִּהְיוּמוֹת נִבְקְעוּ), and the clouds drop down the dew.”

In the Miracle of the Sea, YHWH explicitly instructs Moses to use his scepter to open the sea (Ex 14,16), demonstrating that he had endowed this artifact with cosmogonic powers. Notably, similar cosmogonic powers were attributed to the serpent in Ancient Near Eastern mythologies.³¹ Here again, the serpentine dimension of Moses' scepter seems to be essential for the performance of this miracle.

Return to chaos

In the Ancient Near East, the serpent also symbolized the power to return the organized universe to the chaotic primary stage of creation. This aspect of the creature is represented by Tiamat, Yam, and Apep in the Mesopotamian, Ugaritic, and Egyptian mythologies respectively. A similar effect is expressed in Exodus through the destroying and disorganizing effects of the plagues that Moses performed with the help of his scepter. It also finds specific expression in the plague activated by Aaron's scepter (Ex 8,1), in which frogs emerge from the Nile to cover the entire land of Egypt (וַתֵּכֶס אֶת אֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם, Ex 8,2). This miracle may be interpreted as the submersion of dry land by the waters of the Nile (= the creatures coming from it). By extension, it symbolizes the return of Egypt to a chaotic, primal stage of creation (Ex 8,2). This

³¹ Herbert G. May, “Some Cosmic Connotations of *mayim rabbim*, ‘Many Waters’,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 74, 1955, p. 9–21, p. 20; Rebecca S. Watson, *Chaos Uncreated – A Reassessment of the Theme of Chaos in the Hebrew Bible*, Berlin, de Gruyter, 2012, p. 52–59. This is revealed by the serpentine figuration of the first emergent entities of the Mesopotamian mythology (such as Lahmu / Lahamu), and of the Egyptian cosmogony (Mehen, Apep, Sito). Manfred Lurker, (“Snakes,” in *The Encyclopaedia of Religion*, vol 13, ed. Mircea Eliade, New York, McMillan, 1987, p. 370) concluded that “In the philosophical speculations of the ancient Near East on creation, serpents and dragons symbolized that which had not yet been made manifest: the still undivided unity that held sway before the creation of the world.”

interpretation is confirmed by the association of amphibians with the earliest, primordial stage of creation in Egyptian mythology, revealed by the representation as frogs of the four male deities (*heh*, *Kek*, *Nāu* and *Amen*) of the earliest Ogdoad.³² In such a context, the plague of frogs invading Egypt from the Nile proposes the regression of Egypt to a pre-organized, chaotic state of creation. Here again, the plagues provoked by the scepter are closely related to the power typically attributed to the serpent symbol in the Ancient Near East.

Magic processes

In Antiquity, the serpent was typically associated with esoteric knowledge and its practical expression, the mastering of magic powers.³³ The latter may be construed as the art of exploiting supernatural forces *independently* of the will of the deity that controls them. The art of healing, typically associated with the serpent, tellingly illustrates this intimate nexus of the serpent and magic powers.³⁴ After all, medicine is none other than the use of human knowledge and artifice to counteract diseases provoked by deities without appeasing the latter or fulfilling their request.

This magical dimension is confirmed by the association of the serpent, in both Egypt³⁵ and Mesopotamia,³⁶ with divination, the

³² Serge Sauneron and Jean Yoyotte, "La naissance du monde selon l'Égypte ancienne," in *La naissance du monde - Sources orientales*, Paris, Seuil, 1959, p. 17-92, p. 31-34. This Ogdoad was apparently considered the earliest emergent entity from which the creation process (= the emergence of dry land from the liquid element) started. It is noteworthy that their female counterparts are represented as serpents (see E.A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians* vol. 2, London, Methuen, 1904, p. 378), again expressing the cosmogonic symbolism of this animal.

³³ Golding, *Perceptions of the serpent*, 30-42.

³⁴ Edwin O. James, "The Tree of Life," *Folklore* 79, 1968, p. 241-249; Leslie S. Wilson, *The Serpent Symbol in the Ancient Near East. Nahash and Asherah: Death, Life and Healing*, Maryland, University Press of America, 2001, p. 183-194.

³⁵ This is revealed by the close relation of this artifact with Ptah, the god who controls magical powers, and by the discovery of a rod-serpent in the tomb attributed to an Egyptian magician from the early second millennium BCE. See

art of discovering what the gods intentionally hide from mortals concerning their destiny.³⁷ Such a magical dimension of the serpent's powers is also explicitly stressed in Canaan through the very homonymy between the terms that denote serpent (*nhs*) and divination (*nhs*).

In Exodus, the use of Moses' scepter for magical purposes is especially apparent in Israel's clash with Amalek (Ex 17,8–13). It is noteworthy that the Israelites neither call on YHWH to provide them with victory in this battle nor perform any supplication or ritual. Instead, Moses simply promises the Israelites that they will triumph with the help of the "divine" scepter: "So Moses said to Joshua: Choose for us men, and go out and fight with Amalek. Tomorrow I will stand on the top of the hill with the staff of Elohim in my hand" (Ex 17,9). Two verses later, it is stated explicitly that the scepter, *and it alone*, determined the outcome of the war in what appears to have been a feat of magic: "Whenever Moses held up his hand, Israel prevailed, and whenever he lowered his hand, Amalek prevailed" (Ex 17,11).

Irrespective of the Israelites' merit in this round of combat, the text reveals that the result is exclusively conditioned by rudimentary operations performed with the scepter. This comes to light in the ensuing verse, which describes the effect of the scepter in the purely mechanical fashion that one would expect in an act of magic but not in one of divine intervention: "But Moses' hands grew weary, so they took a stone and put it under him, and he sat on it, while Aaron and Hur held up his hands, one on one side, and the other on the other side. So his hands were steady until the going down of the sun" (Ex 17,12).

Rosalie David, "Rationality versus Irrationality in Egyptian Medicine in Pharaonic and Graeco-Roman Periods," in *Magic and Rationality in Ancient Near Eastern and Graeco-Roman Medicine*, eds. Herman F.J. Horstmanshoff and Marten Stol, Leiden, Brill, 2004, p. 133–151, p. 135–136; Geraldine Pinch, *Magic in Ancient Egypt*, London, The British Museum, 2006, p. 11.

³⁶ Ningizzida, the master of magic powers, is represented as a serpent. His name has been even interpreted as "The lord of the gracious scepter." See Van Buren, "Ningizzida", p. 67.

³⁷ The magical powers associated with the *nhs* are revealed by the parallel, stressed in Numbers 23:23a, between enchantment and divination: "For there is no enchantment (נִחַשׁ) against Jacob, no divination (קִסָּף) against Israel." See also Wilson, *Serpent symbol*, p. 81–85.

This overview reveals that, in Exodus, the wonders typically performed with the help of Moses' and Aaron's scepters specifically correspond to the powers attributed to the serpent in the Ancient Near East. Therefore, we may deduce that the serpent is an essential component of this powerful artifact, which in turn should be construed as a *rod-serpent scepter* or a caduceus.³⁸ Here again, this conclusion finds support in Ancient Egypt, where many deities (e.g., the goddesses Nut, Wadjet, Nehkhebet, and Isis, and the gods Amon and Ptah) are represented as wielding a rod-serpent scepter.³⁹

The snake as essential symbol

The Bible sometimes refers to YHWH as having serpentine attributes. The "smoking in anger" and the "breathing fire" that YHWH turns against his enemies (Deut 29,19; Pss 74,1; 80,5; Isa 30,27–33) unmistakably recalls the power of a dragon. This comparison is especially relevant in 2 Sam 22,9 || Ps 18,9, where the description of the burning mouth and nose of YHWH ("*Smoke rose up from his nostrils, and fire out of YHWH's mouth consumed; Coals were burning from it [i.e. his mouth]*") is strikingly similar to that of the fire-breathing Leviathan in Job 41,11–13: "*From its mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap out. Out of its nostrils come smoke, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. It breathes kindles, coals, and a flame comes out of its mouth.*"⁴⁰ Although it is unlikely that YHWH was

³⁸ According to Wilson (*Serpent symbol*, p. 183), the term "caduceus" generally denotes the figure of one or two snakes intertwined around one another or around a pole. Wilson (*ibid.*, p. 194) identifies the divine scepters of Moses and Aaron as caducei and even assumes (*ibid.*, p. 183–184) that the Greek caduceus is a borrowing from the Phoenician religion.

³⁹ See Nils Billing, "The Secret One. An Analysis of a Core Motif in the Books of the Netherworld", *Studien zur Altägyptischen Kultur* 34, 2006, p. 51–71, p. 55; Golding, *Perception of the serpent*, p. 108, 127, 170–171.

⁴⁰ Brittany Kim and Charlie Trimm ("Yahweh the Dragon: Exploring a Neglected Biblical Metaphor for the Divine Warrior and the Translation of 'Ap,'" *The Bible Translator* 65, 2014, p. 165–184, p. 165–166) stressed that "[...] *The attraction of dragons in cultures throughout the world has not spurred investigations into*

ever regarded as being a snake, the serpentine characteristics attributed to him evoke an essential relationship. This conclusion is supported by the appellation of “divine scepter” (מִטָּה הָאֱלֹהִים), Ex 17,9) used for Moses’ rod-serpent scepter. It is confirmed by evidence that it is with such a scepter in hand that Moses can convince the Israelites that he is truly speaking in the name of YHWH (Ex 4,1). The essentiality of this linkage is supported by further observations.

The metallurgical connection

The serpent symbol was in Antiquity closely related to metallurgy. In the Memphite theology, Ptah, the Egyptian smith god, was likened to the cosmic serpent Ir-ta.⁴¹ Enki, the Sumerian god of crafts, is sometimes referred to as *Enki the snake* (*mus Enki*) or even as *the black snake in the Abzu*.⁴² His terrestrial residence, Dilmun, was the site of extensive serpent worship. His Akkadian counterpart, Ea, is represented as a two-headed snake and Nusku, explicitly identified as the smith god, is encountered in association with serpents.⁴³ Napirisha/Insusinak, the patron deity of Susa, is typically portrayed as sitting on a coiled serpent, surrounded by dragons and facing a fire altar.⁴⁴ In ancient Greece, Erechtonius, the son of Hephaestus and founder of Athens who instructed the inhabitants of the city in the arts of fire, is represented as a ser-

dragon imagery in the Bible, which is surprising since the Hebrew Bible describes YHWH in such terms.”

⁴¹ Sauneron and Yoyotte, “Naissance du monde”, p. 33–38.

⁴² Espak, *Enki and Ea*, p. 51–53.

⁴³ Budge, *Babylonian legends*, p. 24–26.

⁴⁴ See Frans A.M. Wiggerman, “Transtigrian Snake Gods”, in *Sumerian Gods and their Representations*, eds. Irving L. Finkel and Mark J. Geller, Groningen, Styx, 1997, p. 33–55, p. 44–46. His nature as a smith-god is confirmed by the homology between him and Ea/Enki. See Pierre Amiet, “Bactriane proto-historique”, *Syria* 54, 1977, p. 89–121; Heidemarie Koch, “Theology and Worship in Elam and Achaemenid Iran”, in *Civilizations of the Ancient Near East*, ed. Jack M. Sasson, New York, McMillan, 1995, p. 1953–1965, p. 1962; Françoise Grillot-Susini, “Le monde d’en bas en Susiane”, *Revue d’Assyriologie* 95, 2001, p. 141–148.

pent god.⁴⁵ Melqart, the patron of Tyr who was especially involved in metallurgical activity, is symbolized on city coins by a serpent surrounding a sacred tree and a fire burning at its base.⁴⁶

In the southern Levant, the essentiality of the serpent-metallurgy nexus is emphasized by the semantic proximity of serpent (*nḥs*) to copper (*nḥst*).⁴⁷ The reference to the copper serpent as *neḥushtan* (2 Kgs 18,4) also emphasizes the essential relation of copper and serpent in this cultic context.⁴⁸ The metallurgical dimension of the serpent in Canaan is confirmed by the use of copper serpents as cultic artifacts and, especially, by the copper serpent discovered in the tent-sanctuary of Timna (thirteenth century BCE) in the southern Arabah mining area. The identification of cultic metallurgy in this tent sanctuary confirms that the serpent artifact was essentially related to the metallurgic craft.⁴⁹

The god of Israel was once worshipped by the Kenites, who have been identified as Canaanite smelters and metalworkers.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Cadmos, his Boeotian counterpart, is also represented with his female consort, Harmonia, as entwined serpents with a human upper half. See Euripides (*Bacch*, vv. 1358–1359).

⁴⁶ Nissim Amzallag, “The Identity of the Emissary of YHWH”, *Scandinavian Journal for the Old Testament* 26, 2012, p. 123–144, p. 125–126.

⁴⁷ Among the Semitic languages, this homonymy recurs only in Hebrew and Ugaritic. According to Alexander Militarev and Leonid Kogan (*Semitic Etymological Dictionary*, vol 2, Munster, Ugarit Verlag, 2005, p. 89–91), the original term for *serpent* in the linguistic area comprising Canaan is *baṭan* and its alternative designation is *ḥwy* (*ibid.*, p. 135–136). This observation strengthens the premise that the essential linkage between the serpent and copper metallurgy in Canaan is indigenous in origin.

⁴⁸ According to Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner (*The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, Leiden, Brill, 1994, vol. 2, p. 692), *neḥushtan* is a hybrid term of *nḥs* (serpent) and *nḥst* (copper). Hendel (“*nehushtan*”, p. 615) and Münnich (“*Bronze serpents*”, p. 45*) even assume that *neḥushtan* designates it first of all as a copper-made artifact.

⁴⁹ Concerning the copper serpent from Timna, see Beno Rothenberg, *The Egyptian Mining Temple at Timna*, London, IAMS, 1988, p. 147 and pl. 11. A metallurgical casting workshop with two furnaces has been identified at Locus 109 of the Timna sanctuary area (*ibid.*, p. 192–198).

⁵⁰ Sawyer, “Cain and Hephaestus,” p. 159–160, Paula McNutt, *The Forging of Israel – Iron Technology, Symbolism, and Tradition in Ancient Society*, Sheffield, Almond Press, 1990, p. 240–244. Concerning the Kenite-Midianite hypothesis of origin of Yahwism, see Joseph Blenkinsopp, “The Midianite-Kenite Hypothesis Revisited

The essential connection between YHWH and metallurgy is confirmed by the explicit mention of his dwelling in “mountains of copper” (Zech 6,1) and his acknowledged origin in Seir (Deut 33,2; Judg 5,4), the mountainous region near the mining/metallurgical areas of the Arabah Valley. These elements suggest that YHWH was once essentially related to the production and processing of copper in Canaan. Though silenced in the canon account, this metallurgical background is surprisingly well preserved in the Bible, as indicated in the likening of the celestial universe to a giant furnace (Ezekiel 1),⁵¹ the representation of YHWH’s theophany at Sinai as a volcanic eruption (volcanism being exclusively associated in Antiquity with the patron god of metallurgy),⁵² the identification of the divine radiance (*kbd*-YHWH) with molten metal,⁵³ and the central importance of furnace re-melting (recycling rust copper by re-melting it in a furnace) in the vitalization / rejuvenation of the created universe.⁵⁴ The metallurgical background of ancient yahwism, together with the extensive use in the Ancient Near East of the serpent to symbolize metallurgy, confirms the essential relation between YHWH and the serpent symbol.

and the Origin of Judah”, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33, p. 131-53, p. 140-144; Thomas Römer, “The Revelation of the Divine Name to Moses and the Construction of a Memory About the Origins of the Encounter Between YHWH and Israel”, in *Israel’s Exodus in Transdisciplinary Perspective*, eds. Thomas E. Levy, Thomas Schneider, William H.C. Propp, Cham, Springer, 2015, p. 305-315, p. 312-314.

⁵¹ Godfrey R. Driver, “Ezekiel’s Inaugural Vision”, *Vetus Testamentum* 1, 1951, p. 60-62; Nissim Amzallag, “Copper Metallurgy: A Hidden Fundament of the Theology of Ancient Israel?” *Scandinavian Journal for the Old Testament* 27, 2013, p. 151-169, p. 164-166.

⁵² Nissim Amzallag, “Some Implication of the Volcanic Theophany of YHWH on His Primeval Identity”, *Antiguo Oriente* 12, 2014, p. 11-38.

⁵³ Nissim Amzallag, “The Material Nature of the Divine Radiance and its Theological Implications,” *Scandinavian Journal for the Old Testament* 29, 2015, p. 80-96.

⁵⁴ Nissim Amzallag, “Furnace Re-melting as Expression of YHWH’s Holiness: Evidence from the Meaning of *qanna* (קנן) in Divine Context”, *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, 2015, p. 233-252.

The Dionysus-YHWH homology

Many parallels have been observed between the cult of Dionysus in first millennium BCE Greece and the cult of YHWH in Ancient Israel. Both deities are closely related to wine, milk, and honey, and both are essentially worshipped through choral singing. Exactly like YHWH, Dionysus, beyond his popular cult, is approached as a god of ethereal nature. Both attract similar skepticism concerning their genuine capacity to intervene on behalf of their worshippers despite the exclusive devotion that they demand of their adepts.⁵⁵ Dionysus, just like YHWH, displays an essential relation to metallurgy that remains silenced in his canon public cult. In Greece, this dimension is betrayed by the mention of Dionysus as the god who taught Hephaestus his craft and even ushered him into the pantheon, and by the appellation of Dionysus as *father of the Kabiroi*, the Boiotian metalworkers,⁵⁶ exactly as YHWH is termed in Gen 4,1 the “father” of Cain, the first Canaanite metalworker.⁵⁷

Dionysus is in Greece the god typically associated with serpents. According to Greek mythology, he was born in a nest of serpents; later, his head was crowned by serpents. The sanctuary at Delphi, in which the serpent is of central importance, was devoted to Dionysus before it was transformed into an Apollinian temple.⁵⁸ Serpent-handling was practiced in some Dionysian rituals⁵⁹ and the ivy of Dionysus’ cultic rod has been interpreted as a

⁵⁵ Nissim Amzallag, “Was YHWH Worshipped in the Aegean?” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 34, 2011, p. 387-415.

⁵⁶ Albert Schachter, *Cults of Boeotia*, London, University of London, 1981, vol 1, p. 189–190; vol 2, p. 93–95; Karl Kerényi, *The Gods of the Greeks*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1976, p. 85–86.

⁵⁷ Amzallag, “YHWH in the Aegean”, p. 404–408. This special link is confirmed by the Dionysus procession, which was composed of groups identified as metalworkers (corybants, dactyls, couretes, satyrs), exactly as the Kenites were acknowledged in the Bible for their privileged relationship with YHWH (Jeremiah 35).

⁵⁸ Fontenrose, *Python*, p. 373, 377, 393.

⁵⁹ Amzallag, “YHWH in the Aegean”, p. 392 and ref therein. This is even confirmed by the representation of his Thracian homolog, Sabazius, as a giant snake.

serpentine symbol.⁶⁰ This essential relation is confirmed by the centrality of serpents in initiation to the mysteries and secret knowledge of Dionysus.⁶¹ Furthermore, common primitive characteristics of worship insinuate that both cults trace to the same very ancient tradition.⁶² Therefore, this essential relation of the serpent symbol with Dionysus indirectly suggests a similar essential link with YHWH.

Discussion

The foregoing observations reveal a positive, though generally silenced dimension of the serpent in the Bible. This creature fulfills the functions of guardian of the secret knowledge of YHWH, his holy celestial domain, and the abysses. It is also YHWH's faithful emissary, involved in protecting the people of Israel and even individuals among this collective. The serpent also appears to be deeply involved in expressing the power of YHWH. Such an essential relation allows us to characterize the nature of primeval yahwism and its relationship with the Israelite religion.

The roots of primeval yahwism

Beyond the essential link of the serpent with YHWH, this study revealed parallel expressions of this symbol in the Ancient Near East culture. If so, primeval yahwism has much more in common with other religions of that time and place than the Israelite extension with its neighbor counterparts. This property also helps us to characterize the nature of primeval yahwism.

⁶⁰ For the derivation of the Dionysian thyrsus from the Levantine rod-serpent scepter, see Wilson, *Serpent symbol*, p. 45.

⁶¹ Henri Jeanmaire, *Dionysos - Histoire du culte de Bacchus*, Paris, Payot, 1991, p. 16, 403.

⁶² Michael C. Astour, "Un texte d'Ugarit récemment découvert et ses rapports avec l'origine des cultes bachiques grecs", *Revue de l'histoire des religions*, 164, 1963, p. 1-15, p. 2-4.

In the Ancient Near East, the serpent symbol suddenly became abundant in the early fourth millennium BCE and remains so afterward.⁶³ The snake-ornamented ceramics found in public buildings/shrines from that era suggest that the serpent symbol attained central importance in the religious sphere.⁶⁴ It is also noticeable that the same imageries (such as the uroboros and the twinned serpent figures) became common in the Nile Valley, the Levant, Mesopotamia, and Elam.⁶⁵ This sudden *koiné* of the serpent symbol coincides with the emergence of long-range exchange networks in the Ancient Near East pursuant to the diffusion of furnace metallurgy of copper and the distribution of metal artifacts.⁶⁶

In southern Canaan, too, the use of the serpent as religious symbol coincides with the emergence and development of the

⁶³ Edith Porada, "Why Cylinder Seals? Engraved Cylindrical Seal Stones of the Ancient Near East, Fourth to First Millennium BC," *The Art Bulletin* 75, 1993, p. 563-582; Emmanuelle Honoré, "Earlier Cylinder-Seal Glyptic in Egypt From Greater Mesopotamia to Naqada", in *The International Conference on Heritage of Naqada and Qus Region Monastery of the Archangel Michael*, ed. Hany A. Hanna, ed., Naqada, 2007, p. 31-45.

⁶⁴ Briggs Buchanan, "The Prehistoric Stamp Seal – A Reconsideration of Some Old Excavations", *Journal of American Oriental Studies* 87, 1967, p. 265-279; Joines, *Serpent symbolism*, p. 97-98; Diana K. McDonald, *Serpent Imagery on Ancient Near Eastern Pottery*, PhD dissertation, Columbia University, 1989, p. 23-29, 113-21, 156. In the southern Levant, the cultic importance of the serpent is evidenced, for example, at Shiqmim, where a ceramic snake-head terra cotta was found in a "public building." See Thomas E. Levy et al., "Protohistoric Investigations at the Shiqmim Chalcolithic Village and Cemetery: Interim Report on the 1987 Season," *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research (Supplementary Studies)* 27, 1991, p. 29-46, p. 33-34.

⁶⁵ Hans H. Van der Osten, "The Snake Symbol and the Hittite Twist", *American Journal of Archaeology* 30, 1926, p. 405-417; Buchanan, "Prehistoric stamp seal"; Waldemar Deonna, "Ouroboros", *Artibus Asiae* 15, 1952, p. 163-170; Beatrice Teissier, "Glyptic Evidence for a Connection between Iran, Syro-Palestine and Egypt in the Fourth and Third Millennia", *Iran* 25, 1987, p. 27-53, p. 33-35. McDonald (*Serpent imagery*, p. 112) observes: "Teleilat Ghassul, for instance has a plethora of sherds with applique snakes that presumably came from vessels. The snakes are mostly of a type found frequently in Mesopotamia."

⁶⁶ Nissim Amzallag, "From Metallurgy to Bronze Age Civilizations: The Synthetic Theory," *American Journal of Archaeology* 113, 2009, p. 497-519, p. 504-508.

indigenous furnace metallurgy of copper in the Chalcolithic period (4500–3700 BCE).⁶⁷ YHWH's acknowledged origin in the Arabah (Seir, Paran, Teman—see Deut 33,2; Judg 5,4-5; Hab 3,3), where copper metallurgy is known to have been practiced from the late fifth millennium BCE,⁶⁸ suggests that the metallurgical background of *primeval yahwism* is anchored in the earliest stages of copper production in this area. This hypothesis is supported in the Bible by the first mention of YHWH (neither as Elohim nor as YHWH-Elohim) upon the birth of Cain (Gen 4,1), forefather of the Canaanite smelters, suggesting that the discovery of the deity is closely related to the experience of copper metallurgy. This is confirmed by the mention of Cain as both the *first* worshipper of YHWH (Gen 4,3) and the first civilizing hero (Gen 4,17–22).⁶⁹

These observations reveal that the positive expressions of the serpent symbol in the Bible do not necessarily give evidence of foreign influence on the Israelite religion. Rather, the parallels with ancient Near Eastern traditions may reflect a common archaic background rooted in the period of diffusion of copper metallurgy and its cultural developments throughout the region.

The ambivalent nature of the serpent symbol

The Bible is ambivalent about the serpent, presenting him alternately as a symbol of evil and an enemy of YHWH and as YHWH's emissary, one of his essential attributes, and an emblem of his powers. The most common way to explain this contrast is to assume the coexistence of two distinct schools of biblical authors,

⁶⁷ Carolyn Elliott ("The Religious Beliefs of the Ghassulians c. 4000–3100 BC", *Palestine Exploration Quarterly* 108–109, 1977, p. 3–25, p. 15) concludes that "The sun, tree and snake are probably the most common motifs in the Ghassulian, present on many objects of various materials."

⁶⁸ Aaron N. Shugar, *Archaeometallurgical Investigation of the Chalcolithic Site of Abu Matar, Israel. A Reassessment of Technology and its Implication for the Ghassulian Culture*. PhD Dissertation, University of London 2000, p. 58, 71, Beno Rothenberg and John Merkel, "Chalcolithic 5th Millennium BC Copper Smelting at Timna", *IAMS Newsletter* 20, 1998, p. 1–3.

⁶⁹ Sawyer, "Cain and Hephaestus".

each expressing an opposite view concerning the serpent. This dichotomy in attitudes toward the serpent, however, may also reflect an essential ambivalence intrinsic to the serpent symbol itself. Such a duality is clearly observable in ancient Mesopotamia, where both Tiamat, the evil force of destruction and chaos, and Ea, the beneficent great god, were represented as sea-dragon monsters.⁷⁰ It recurs in Ancient Egypt, where the sea-dragon Apep (Apopis) symbolized the forces of chaos and destruction⁷¹ at a time when cosmic serpents were much in favor.⁷² Ugaritic religion reflects the same ambivalence concerning the god Yam, manifested in the way he is evoked by Baal, his rival:

*Surely I lifted up the Dragon, I overpowered him
I smote the writhing serpent, Encircler with seven heads
I smote the beloved of El, Arsh, I finished off El's calf, Atik
I smote El's she-dog (klbt el), Fire; I exterminated El's daughter, Flame
I fought for the silver, I took possession of gold
(KTU 1.3 iii 40-48)⁷³*

The expression “*the beloved of El*” and his representation as a calf (El himself being configured as a bull) leaves little doubt about the primeval status of Yam, the cosmic fiery serpent, as El's emissary in the Ugarit pantheon. Arsh, Yam's other alternate name, is typically used to denote *Koshar*, the smith god who is also

⁷⁰ See Mundkur (*The cult of the serpent*, p. 126) and Golding (*Perceptions of the serpent*, p. 96-97) and ref therein for Tiamat and Ea, respectively.

⁷¹ Ludwig D. Morenz, “On the Origin, Name and Nature of an Ancient Egyptian Anti-God,” *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 63, 2004, p. 201-205.

⁷² For instance, the cosmic serpent Mehen / Neḥaḥer guides the passage of the Sun God and protects him during his daily regeneration in the netherworld. See Peter A. Piccione, “Mehen, Mysteries and Resurrection from the Coiled Serpent,” *Journal of the American Research Center in Egypt* 27, 1990, p. 43-52, p. 43; and Billing, “The secret one”, p. 61. The ambivalent nature of the cosmic serpent creature is even expressed through Suto, the cosmic Egyptian ouroboros who marks the boundary between the chaotic vitalizing forces of chaos and an organized universe that needs occasional revitalization. See Robert T. Rundle Clarke, *Myth and Symbol in Ancient Egypt*, London, Thames and Hudson, 1959, p. 239-241.

⁷³ Transl. Nick Wyatt, *Religious Texts from Ugarit*, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 1998, p. 79-80.

identified as an emissary of El.⁷⁴ If so, Yam and Koshar were regarded as two facets of one reality, Yam representing the destructive forces of chaos and Koshar, the divine architect, evoking the civilizing and organizing power.⁷⁵

The contrasting attitudes toward dragon-monsters (Tannin, Leviathan) in the Bible apparently reflect the same duality that one encounters in the other Near Eastern cultures. This is supported by the ambivalence that the Bible expresses toward YHWH, praised for his fighting the forces of destruction (Ps 74,13–14) and glorified for stimulating them (e.g., Ps 46,3.4.7.10).⁷⁶

This ambivalence clarifies in reference to the metallurgical reality once again. The recycling (= regeneration) of metal from rust artifacts by re-melting it in a furnace was also treated as the source of continuous vitalization of the created universe. Conversely, this process implies completing the destruction of shape by melting and the restoration of matter to its primeval nature as raw material. The Bible expresses the ambivalence of such a process of rejuvenation by calling it a *qanna* (קנא), which relates not only to YHWH's destructive and awful powers but also to his holiness, and through it, his vitalizing powers (Ex 34,14; Jos 24,19).⁷⁷ It seems, therefore, that the antagonistic expressions of the serpent symbol in the Ancient Near East reflect the ambivalence of a theology that interprets the process of furnace re-melting as the privileged source of the vitalization of the universe.

⁷⁴ Edward Lipinski, *Dieux et déesses de l'univers phénicien et punique*, Leuven, Peeters, 1995, p. 109–112. Their closeness is confirmed by use of the terms “son of Yam” or “fisherman of Lady Ashera of the Sea” to denote Koshar and by his status of patron-deity of boat construction and sea navigation. See Omega M. Starr, “A Search for the Identity of Yamm ‘Prince Sea’ of the Canaanite Baal and Anath Cycle”, *Folklore* 84, 1973, p. 224–37, p. 233.

⁷⁵ The metallurgical dimension of Yam is reflected in KTU 1.3 iii 40–48 through the mention of fire and flame in direct relation to precious metals, silver and gold.

⁷⁶ Nissim Amzallag, “The Cryptic Theme of Psalm 46 and the Theology of the Korahites”, *Revue Biblique* 122, 2015, p. 26–45, p. 30–32. It is likely that this dualism is condensed in the succinct liturgical formula that defines YHWH as the “great and awful deity” (הָאֵל הַגָּדוֹל וְהַנּוֹרָא), e.g. Deut 7,21; 10,17; Joel 3,4; Mal 1,14; Pss 47,3; 96,4 (= 1 Chr 16,25); 99,3; Danl 9,4; Neh 1,5; 4,8; 9,32.

⁷⁷ Amzallag, “Furnace re-melting”, p. 247–250.

Canaan and primeval yahwism

The continuity in use of the serpent symbol between the Canaanite and the Israelite periods has classically been interpreted as evidence of pagan Canaanite influence on the religion of Israel. The essential affinity between YHWH and the serpent symbol, however, together with the central importance of metallurgy in Canaan, raises the possibility that the serpent symbol in pre-Israelite Canaan pertained to a form of worship closely related to primeval yahwism. Several observations support this proposition:

- *The metallurgical connection:* The cultic serpent in pre-Israelite Canaan, sometime called *nhstb* (= the good serpent), has been likened in Antiquity with Shai, the Egyptian “good serpent” attached to the cult of Ptah, the Egyptian smith god.⁷⁸ This means that, exactly as in primeval yahwism, the Canaanite cultic serpent is closely related to copper metallurgy.

- *Continuity in serpent worship:* the site of Dan was characterized by a Canaanite serpent worship in the Bronze Age⁷⁹ that extended into the Israelite period.⁸⁰ Accordingly, the specific mention of the serpent at Dan as a creature that protected Israel *in the name of YHWH* (Gen 49,17–18) suggests that YHWH was already worshipped through the medium of the serpent in the pre-Israelite period.

- *The copper serpent* as a cultic artifact is evidenced in late Bronze Age Canaan⁸¹ but was totally unknown in Egypt, Mesopo-

⁷⁸ Wilson, *Serpent symbol*, p. 175, 182.

⁷⁹ Charlesworth, *Good and evil serpent*, p. 76–77 and ref therein. This worship appears to be closely related to the presence of the sources of the Jordan River at this site.

⁸⁰ Relating to the serpent cult at Dan, Koh (*Snake cult*, p. 98) concludes: “There is also evidence in the Northern kingdom of Israel that the snake cult probably served the Yahwistic religion as a subsidiary cult.”

⁸¹ Meggido, Tel Mevorakh, Sichem, Gezer, and Hazor. All these copper serpents are similar in shape and size (10–20 cm), suggesting all designated the same reality. All were discovered in sacral areas of temples. In Temple H at Hazor, two copper serpents were unearthed from the holy of holies (one from Stratum IB [1400–1300 BCE] and the other from Stratum IA [1300–1200]). For a review of these findings, see Koh (*Snake cult*, p. 113–114) and Münnich (“Bronze serpent”, p. 39–41).

tamia, Anatolia, and the Aegean. This is why it should be considered a local Canaanite development,⁸² making the Israelite copper serpent the extension of a typically Canaanite cult. If it is specifically associated with YHWH (Num 21,8-9; 2 Kgs 18,4), the simplest hypothesis is to assume that copper serpent worship in Canaan was related to primeval yahwism.

- *The serpent symbol and holiness:* In both the Hazor and Timna temples, the copper serpent was found *in situ* in a sanctuary. This suggests that, before the rise of the Israelite religion, the serpent was still a privileged symbol and even source of holiness in Canaan. Again this characteristic fits the biblical emphasis on the holy nature of YHWH.⁸³

- *The serpent as a lone symbol:* In Bronze Age Canaan, the serpent is frequently found *alone* in figurations and potteries.⁸⁴ By implication, it symbolized divine powers distinct from all others. This singularity recalls the clear separation that the Israelite religion establishes between YHWH and all other divine beings.

- *The serpent as an anonymous symbol:* Despite the central importance of the serpent symbol in Canaan, we know neither the name nor the identity of any snake deity.⁸⁵ This means that, before the rise of the Israelite religion, the serpent still served as the symbol of a nameless and faceless deity. This reality fits both the existence of mysteries surrounding the god of metallurgy (whose identity in southern Canaan is unknown today, though this activity was of central economic importance in this region) and surrounding YHWH, whose name was unknown to the Israelites before the Exodus.⁸⁶ This is another singularity that YHWH shares

⁸² Koh (*Snake cult*, p. 115) concludes: "Taking all these factors in consideration, it is apparent that the metal snake symbols are strictly a southern Levantine development, more precisely a Canaanite heritage."

⁸³ 1 Sam 2,2; 6,20; Isa 6,3; 58,13; Hab 1,12; Zech 14,5; Ps 99,5,9.

⁸⁴ Koh (*Snake cult*, p. 88–89) notes that "[...] Snake objects were not merely decorative motifs on utilitarian vessels; they stood alone in the Late Bronze Age."

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 26.

⁸⁶ According to Ex 6,3, even the patriarchs were oblivious to YHWH's true name and identity: "I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as 'god almighty' (אֱלֹהִים), but by my name YHWH, I did not make myself known to them."

with the mysterious deity who hides underneath the Canaanite serpent symbol.

These observations, taken together, suggest the existence of a pre-Israelite form of YHWH worship in Canaan, one that found privileged expression through the serpent symbol. They even suggest that in Canaan, exactly as in Israel, YHWH was acknowledged, in his primeval worship, as the master of holiness and of all powers expressed through the serpent (vitality, healing, fertility, protection, magic powers, mysteries, secret knowledge, and so on).

The meaning of Hezekiah's reform

These considerations show that relations between Canaanite and Israelite religions were much more complex than is generally assumed. Scholars have long noticed the similarity between YHWH and El, the great Canaanite god.⁸⁷ Others hypothesize that the religion of Ancient Israel may have not been so different than that of neighboring peoples.⁸⁸ The present investigation of the

⁸⁷ The similarity is reflected in dwelling in a tent-shrine at the source of the rivers (the Garden of Eden and Mount Saphon), and the liturgical formulae by which they are evoked. Both deities are identically called "*the creator of the earth*" (*El qoneh areš*), "*the benevolent and compassionate god*," and "*the eternal god*." See E. Theodore Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*, Atlanta, Scholar Press, 1980, p. 152; Richard J. Clifford, "Phoenician Religion", *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 279, 1990, p. 55–64, p. 59; Mullen, *The divine council*, p. 28, 136; John F. Healey, "The Kindly and Merciful God: Some Semitic Divine Epithets", in *Studien zum Alten Testament und zum Alten Orient*, eds. Manfred Dietrich and Ingo Kottsieper, Munster, Ugarit Verlag, 1998, p. 349–356; Meindert Dijkstra, "El, the God of Israel—Israel, the People of YHWH: On the Origins of Ancient Israelite Yahwism", in *Only One God? Monotheism in Ancient Israel and the Veneration of the Goddess Asherah*, eds. Bob Becking, Meindert Dijkstra and Marjo Korpel, Sheffield, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, p. 81–126, p. 94.

⁸⁸ According to Edward L. Greenstein ("The God of Israel and the Gods of Canaan: How Different Were They?" *Proceedings of the World Congress of Jewish Studies A*, 1997, p. 58*), "*The God of Biblical Israel may not actually be very different from the*

serpent symbol confirms these views by revealing the existence of a primeval yahwism in Canaan, before the rise of the Israelite religion. The positive references to the serpent in the Bible reveal that this symbol was an integral part of the Israelite religion until Hezekiah's religious reform (2 Kgs 18,4). Consequently, the eradication of serpent worship (together with the pillars and the Asherah) by Hezekiah should be interpreted not as the destruction of foreign idolatrous cults but more as the sudden disruption of the Israelite religion from primeval yahwism, its ancestor. This reform, separating the Israelite religion from those of its neighbors (which were apparently still associated with primeval yahwism) appears to have been restricted to the cult of YHWH in Jerusalem. It isolated the "Judean yahwism" from all the other developments in primeval yahwism in Canaan, including the one practiced in the northern Israelite kingdom. The derogatory view of Canaanite religious practices that is extensively expressed in the Bible, together with consensual silence concerning the metallurgical background of the cult of YHWH, suggests that many biblical authors belonged to the school of thought that inspired Hezekiah's reform.

gods of the neighboring nations, but claiming that he is, is an important part of the rhetoric promoting devotion to that god alone."

Notes d'épigraphie sémitique

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Abstract. Study of two fragmentary West-Semitic inscriptions: 1. A tentative interpretation of a 12th century BCE Lachish inscription that could have some connection with the name of the king of Lachish in Joshua 10,3. 2. An unpublished fragment of a Palaeo-Hebrew monumental inscription from Elephantine (Egypt).

1. Le tesson de jarre inscrit de Lakish : essai d'interprétation

Benjamin Sass, Yosef Garfinkel, Michael G. Hasel et Martin G. Klingbeil viennent de publier¹ un tesson de jarre incisé avant cuisson provenant du niveau VI de Lakish et comportant une inscription alphabétique de trois lignes lues :

1.]PKL[?
2.]SPR
3.]-P-[?

Cette publication est accompagnée d'une analyse paléographique détaillée mais ne comporte ni traduction ni essai d'interprétation.

L'identification des sept lettres lues par l'*editio princeps* semble tout à fait convaincante. L'étude des restes des deux autres lettres pourrait permettre de proposer une interprétation historique générale de cette petite inscription bien datée du XII^e siècle av. n. è., plus précisément avant environ 1130 av. n. è.

¹ « The Lachish Jar Sherd: An Early Alphabetic Inscription Discovered in 2014 », *BASOR* 374, 2015, p. 233-245.

Bien que les restes de la première lettre conservée de chacune des trois lignes soient fragmentaires, voire très fragmentaires pour la ligne 3, il est possible, au moins à titre d'hypothèse, de considérer cette inscription comme quasi-complète et ne comportant primitivement que 9 lettres (3×3) comme l'a déjà reconnu l'*editio princeps*². En effet, au moins jusqu'à maintenant, les recherches pour trouver d'autres fragments de cette inscription n'ont rien donné³. De plus, la première ligne de l'inscription semble la première ligne originale tandis que la deuxième ligne révèle que l'inscription ne se continuait pas après le *resh*. Enfin les premières lettres des trois lignes semblent alignées verticalement.

À la ligne 1, comme déjà remarqué dans la note 6 de l'*editio princeps*, le mot PKL peut être interprété comme un nom propre, *Pīkol*, connu dans la Bible comme le nom du général du roi de Gérar, Abimélek, « au pays des Philistins » (Genèse 21,22.32 et 26,26). L'étymologie de ce nom propre reste incertaine et discutée⁴ mais on peut le rapprocher maintenant de *pkly* attesté en ougaritique (RIH 83/24 + 84/27)⁵. De par sa position, ce nom propre indiquerait le nom du propriétaire de la jarre.

À la ligne 2, la lecture SPR paraît assurée. Elle peut être interprétée comme un titre, une fonction : « scribe ». Outre l'araméen

² Ibidem, p. 236 : « the text could be complete ».

³ Ibidem, p. 233.

⁴ W. F. Albright (« Egypt and the Early History of the Negeb », *JPOS* 4, 1924, p. 130-161, spéc. 138-139) interprétait ce nom comme un nom égyptien qui, avec une métathèse, signifierait « le Lycien ». À la suite de Spiegelberg, M. Noth (*Überlieferungsgeschichte des Pentateuch*, Stuttgart, 1948, p. 171, note 443) pensait aussi à un nom égyptien mais signifiant « le Syrien ». R. A. S. Macalister (*The Philistines. Their History and Civilization*, The Schweich Lectures 1911, London 1914 / Chicago, 1965, p. 81) a proposé d'y voir un nom philistin, hypothèse en partie reprise par J. D. Ray, (« Two etymologies: Ziklag and Phicol », *VT* 36, 1986, p. 355-361, spéc. 358-359) avec des rapprochements possibles avec des noms anatoliens, interprétation reprise avec prudence dans G. J. Wenham, *Genesis 16-50*, Word Biblical Commentary 2, Dallas, 1994, p. 91-92.

⁵ W. G. E. Watson, « Ugaritic Onomastics (45) », *Aula Orientalis* 13, 1995, p. 217-229, spéc. 227 ; J.-L. Cunchillos – J.-P. Vita, *II. Concordancia de Palabras Ugaríticas en morfología desplegada*, Madrid/Zaragoza, 1995, p. 1679 ; G. del Olmo Lete – J. Sanmartín, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language in the Alphabetic Tradition*, HdO 1/112, Leiden, 2015, p. 660.

et l'hébreu ancien, biblique et épigraphique, cette fonction est déjà bien attestée à Ougarit⁶. Comme ce titre ne semble pas précédé de l'article (dont l'existence à cette haute époque reste incertaine), il pourrait être à l'état construit.

À la ligne 3, seule la deuxième lettre a été lue par l'*editio princeps*. Pour les restes très limités de la première lettre, celle-ci envisage comme possible l'appartenance à un *gimel*, *zayin*, *yod*, *samek*, *pe* ou *shin*, tandis que, pour la troisième lettre, elle se pose la question d'un éventuel *ʿayin* avec une marque en-dessous⁷. Cette dernière interprétation nous semble justifiée et quasi-certaine, car, même si le signe circulaire ne comporte pas de point en son milieu, comme pourrait le laisser croire la photographie couleur, la forme circulaire non liée directement à un autre trait correspond bien à celle du *ʿayin* de cette époque. Le trait horizontal ajouté sous le cercle est plus difficile à interpréter : de façon conjecturale, on peut songer à une manière de souligner la dernière lettre de l'inscription. Dans notre hypothèse de travail suivant laquelle il n'y avait pas de lettre avant la première lettre visible, on aurait donc un mot de trois lettres : -P^c. Comme GP^c, ZP^c, SP^c, PP^c ne semblent correspondre à aucun nom, ni propre ni commun, nous pouvons, au moins provisoirement, écarter les lectures G, Z, S et P. Analysons les deux autres lettres possibles :

– Un *shin*, envisagé comme possible par l'*editio princeps*, donnerait le mot ŠP^c. Ce mot pourrait être un nom commun signifiant « abondance, opulence » (cf. par exemple Deutéronome 33,19 et aussi ŠP^cH : Job 12,11 ; 2 Rois 9,17) mais on pourrait aussi songer à un nom propre, peut-être déjà attesté sur un sceau hébreu⁸ et à rapprocher de l'hébreu biblique *šipʿi* (1 Chroniques 4,37)⁹. Paléographiquement la lecture/restitution d'un *shin* à partir du trait

⁶ Ibidem, p. 755-756 ; J. Tropper, *Kleines Wörterbuch des Ugaritischen*, Wiesbaden, 2008, p. 111.

⁷ BASOR 374, 2015, p. 243.

⁸ B. Overbeck – Y. Meshorer, *Das heilige Land. Antike Münzen aus einem Jahrtausend jüdischer Geschichte*, München, 1993, p. 6 : n° A23 ; A. Lemaire, « Épigraphie palestinienne : nouveaux documents II. Décennie 1985-1995 », *Henoch* 17, 1995, p. 209-242, spéc. 235 : n° 199

⁹ M. Noth, *Die israelitischen Personennamen im Rahmen der gemeinsemitischen Namengebung*, Stuttgart, 1928, p. 231

horizontal supérieur du début de la ligne 3 supposerait un *shin* vertical, ce qui correspondrait bien à une datation dans le Bronze Récent d'après les parallèles de deux autres inscriptions de Lakish : l'aiguière et le bol, ainsi que de l'inscription du bol de Qubur el-Walayda et de l'inscription d'ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah¹⁰. Cependant, sauf peut-être dans les inscriptions d'ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah et de Qubur el-Walayda, le trait supérieur du *shin* vertical est généralement plus ou moins en diagonale et légèrement incurvé.

– Pour le trait horizontal supérieur du début de la ligne 3, l'*editio princeps* envisage comme aussi possible paléographiquement : un *yod*. Vers cette époque, le *yod* présente plusieurs variantes posant parfois des problèmes d'identification. L'existence éventuelle de deux *yods* dans la deuxième partie de l'inscription du bol de Lakish reste très incertaine même si la forme de la lettre ressemble quelque peu au *yod* vraisemblable de l'ostrakon d'ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah et au *yod* incertain de l'aiguière de Lakish. Le trait supérieur horizontal du début de la ligne 3 ne semble pas correspondre à une telle forme mais il pourrait très bien correspondre au trait supérieur du *yod*, septième lettre de l'inscription de Qubur el-Walayda, et à la forme de *yod* attestée par plusieurs pointes de flèche¹¹ ainsi que sur le poids/pierre de fronde de Byblos¹² vraisemblablement à dater vers le milieu du XI^e s. av. n. è.¹³.

¹⁰ Cf. les fac-similés de BASOR 374, 2015, p. 237-238, 240 : fig. 3-6, 19 ; T. H. Gaster, « The Archaic Inscriptions » in O. Tufnell et alii (éd.), *Lachish II. The Fosse Temple*, London, 1940, p. 49-57 ; O. Tufnell, *Lachish IV. The Bronze Age*, London, 1958, p. 129, pl. 43 et 44 :2 ; M. Kochavi, « An Ostrakon of the Period of the Judges from ʿIzbet Ṣarṭah », *Tel Aviv* 4, 1977, p. 1-13 ; A. Demsky, « A Proto-Canaanite Abecedary Dating from the Period of the Judges and its Implications for the History of the Alphabet », *Tel Aviv* 4, 1977, p. 14-27 ; F. M. Cross, « Newly Found Inscriptions in Old Canaanite and Early Phoenician Scripts », *BASOR* 238, 1980, p. 1-20, spéc. 1-4 ; J. Naveh, *Early History of the Alphabet*, Leiden, 1982, p. 33-41 ; É. Puech, « Origine de l'alphabet », *RB* 93, 1986, p. 161-213, spéc. 170-180.

¹¹ Cf., par exemple, B. Sass, *The Genesis of the Alphabet and its Development in the Second Millennium B.C.*, ÄAT 13, Wiesbaden, 1988, p. 82-83 : fig. 208-209 ; BASOR 374, 2015, p. 241 : fig. 22 ; M. Martin, « A Twelfth Century Bronze Palimpsest », *RSO* 37, 1962, p. 175-197 ; *Sauvegarde de Tyr*, Paris, 1980, p. 31 : n° 14 ; P. Bordreuil, « Épigraphes phéniciennes sur bronze, sur pierre et sur céramique », dans *Archéologie au Levant. Recueil à la mémoire de Roger Saïdah*, Paris, 1982, p. 187-192, spéc. 188 ; A. Lemaire, « Nouvelle pointe de flèche inscrite proto-phénicienne »,

Dans l'hypothèse de lecture/restitution d'un *yod* au début de la ligne 3, le mot YP^c pourrait se rattacher à un verbe yp^c signifiant « briller, apparaître » attesté au *hiphil* en hébreu biblique. Surtout YP^c pourrait être un nom propre correspondant à l'akkadien *Ya-paḥu*, « (la divinité) est apparue », attesté comme le nom du maire de Gézer dans les lettres d'El-Amarna (EA 297,3 ; 298,4 ; 299,3 ; 300,4 ; 378,3) et à rapprocher de *Yapaḥu-Haddi*, nom du maire de Beyrouth (?)¹⁴. En fait, yp^c est déjà attesté en écriture alphabétique à Ugarit où on peut le rapprocher de yp^cb^l, yp^cmlk, yp^cn, yp^ct ainsi que de *ia-pa-milku*, *ia-pa-ú*, *niqmepa/nqmp*¹⁵. On peut aussi en rapprocher yp^chd attesté sur un sceau-cylindre araméen¹⁶ et yp^c à Éléphantine¹⁷. YP^c est aussi attesté en hébreu biblique sous la forme *yāpī'a* à la fois pour un fils de David né à Jérusalem (2 Sa-

SEL 6, 1989, p. 53-56 ; H. Sader, « Deux épigraphes phéniciennes inédites », *Syria* 67, 1990, p. 315-321, spéc. 316-317.

¹² Cf. dernièrement M. G. Amadasi Guzzo, « “Alphabet insaisissable”. Quelques notes concernant la diffusion de l'écriture consonantique », dans J. Elayi et J.-M. Durand (éd.), *Bible et Proche-Orient. Mélanges André Lemaire*, Trans-seuphratène 44, Paris, 2014, p. 67-85, spéc. 84, fig. 4.

¹³ Cf. A. Lemaire, « 'Ozibaal de Byblos ? (XI^e s. av. n. è.) », dans O. Loretz et alii (éd.), *Ritual, Religion and Reason. Studies in the Ancient World in Honour of Paolo Xella*, AOAT 404, Münster, 2013, p. 289-296.

¹⁴ W. L. Moran, *Les lettres d'El-Amarna*, LAPO 13, Paris, 1987, p. 588.

¹⁵ Cf. F. Gröndahl, *Die Personennamen der Texte aus Ugarit*, *Studia Pohl* 1, Rome, 1967, p. 144-145, 336, 345, 392 ; G. del Olmo Lete – J. Sanmartin, *A Dictionary of the Ugaritic Language ...*, ³2015, p. 958-959.

¹⁶ M. Maraqtan, *Die semitischen Personennamen in den alt- und reichsaramäischen Inschriften aus Vorderasien*, TSO 5, Hildesheim/Zürich/New York, 1988, p. 84, 172 ; P. Bordreuil, « Le répertoire iconographique des sceaux araméens inscrits et son évolution », dans B. Sass – Ch. Uehlinger (éd.), *Studies in the Iconography of Northwest Semitic Inscribed Seals*, OBO 125, Fribourg/Göttingen, 1993, p. 74-100, spéc. 80-82 ; N. Avigad – B. Sass, *A Corpus of West Semitic Stamp Seals*, (*infra* : WSS), Jérusalem, 1997, p. 505.

¹⁷ Cf. B. Porten – A. Yardeni, *Textbook of Aramaic Documents from Ancient Egypt* 3. *Literature, Accounts, Lists*, Jérusalem / Winona Lake, 1993, p. 280 : n° 4.8 : 6. E. Lipiński, « Vestiges phéniciens d'Andalousie », *OLP* 15, 1984, p. 81-132, spéc. 104-16) propose de lire b^lyp^c à la fin de la ligne 1 de l'inscription de la statuette de Séville mais cette lecture paraît, pour le moins, très incertaine.

muel 5,15 ; 1 Chroniques 3,7) et pour le dernier roi « amorite » de Lakish (Josué 10,3)¹⁸ mis à mort par Josué (10,26).

Nous pouvons donc proposer de lire le tesson de jarre inscrit de Lakish comme indiquant le nom de son propriétaire et sa fonction : « Pikol, scribe de Yapî'a » suivant un type de formule déjà attesté sur le sceau ammonite WSS n° 862 (*ḥty spr 'dnr*) et à rapprocher du syntagme *spr(y) hmlk* (2 Rois 12,11 ; 2 Chroniques 24,11 ; Esther 3,12 ; 8,9)¹⁹.

La coïncidence du nom propre possiblement lu à la ligne 3 (YP^c) avec celui du dernier roi/maire « amorite » de Lakish dans la tradition biblique (Josué 10,3) est troublante. Il serait tentant d'interpréter la mention épigraphique et les mentions bibliques comme visant le même personnage. Cette identification serait possible ; elle n'impliquerait pas nécessairement d'accepter l'historicité de la conquête de Lakish par Josué (10,32)²⁰ mais supposerait simplement que le nom du dernier roi/maire de Lakish aurait été conservé dans la tradition locale, soit à Lakish même (éventuellement sur une inscription ?), soit à Jérusalem (tradition orale ou écrite ?)²¹. Cependant il faut souligner les incertitudes de lecture de cette inscription fragmentaire, concernant spécialement l'identification de la première lettre de la ligne 3. Dans l'état

¹⁸ Cf. R. S. Hess, « Non-Israelite Personal Names in the Book of Joshua », *CBQ* 58, 1996, p. 205-214, spéc. 206.

¹⁹ Cf. déjà A. Lemaire, « Nouveaux sceaux nord-ouest sémitiques », *Syria* 63, 1986, p. 305-325, spéc. 318.

²⁰ La datation et l'historicité de ce récit sont discutées : cf., par exemple, R. de Vaux, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël. Des origines à l'installation en Canaan*, Paris, 1971, p. 505-506, 576-580 ; idem, *Histoire ancienne d'Israël II. La période des Juges*, Paris, 1973, p. 106-107 ; R. S. Hess, *Joshua. An Introduction and Commentary*, Tyndale Old Testament Commentary, Leicester, 1996 ; N. Na'aman, « The "Conquest of Canaan" in the Book of Joshua and in History », dans I. Finkelstein – N. Na'aman eds., *From Nomadism to Monarchy. Archaeological and Historical Aspects of Early Israel*, Jérusalem, 1994, p. 218-281, spéc. 251-256 ; M. Langlois, *Le texte de Josué 10. Approche philologique, épigraphique et diachronique*, OBO 252, Fribourg/Göttingen, 2011, p. 24-25.

²¹ Selon V. Fritz, « Die sogenannte Liste der besiegten Könige in Josua 12 », *ZDPV* 85, 1969, p. 136-161, spéc. 139, n. 16 : « Die Herkunft der Personennamen in Jos. 10,3 ist nicht zu klären ».

actuel de la documentation, une telle identification resterait donc très incertaine.

2. Un fragment paléo-hébreu à Éléphantine ?

Il est bien connu que tous les documents (papyri, cuir, ostraca, étiquettes sur bois) de la communauté judéenne d'Éléphantine sont écrits en araméen et non en hébreu. Cependant cette généralité pourrait comporter une exception. Le « Rapport sur les fouilles à Éléphantine de l'Institut Biblique Pontifical en 1918 » rédigé par « les RR. PP. A. Strazzulli, P. Bovier-Lapierre et Séb. Ronzevalle », mentionne « un petit fragment d'inscription lapidaire juive, du type de l'inscription du Canal de Siloé, à Jérusalem »²². Malheureusement ce bref rapport préliminaire n'a jamais été suivi d'une publication détaillée²³ et, récemment, A. Joisten-Pruschke semble avoir recherché en vain trace de ce fragment avec d'autres fragments de papyri araméens à l'Institut Biblique Pontifical de Rome²⁴. On pourrait donc se demander si ce fragment lapidaire du type de l'inscription de Siloé a jamais existé.

En fait, A. Joisten-Pruschke n'avait apparemment pas connaissance de la publication des deux volumes de *La collection Clermont-Ganneau* par Hélène Lozachmeur en 2006 où cette dernière cite quatre lettres et une carte postale envoyées par Ronzevalle à

²² *Annales du Service des Antiquités de l'Égypte* 18, 1919, p. 1-7, spéc. 5.

²³ Selon E. G. Kraeling, *The Brooklyn Museum Aramaic Library*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 1953, p. 16 : « According to a list preserved at that institution [= IBP de Rome], three Aramaic ostraca, some fragments of Aramaic papyri, and two fragments of inscriptions, one of which is in Canaanite script, were recovered. But nothing was published at the time ... » ; de plus, selon la n. 58 « Rektor Josef Vogt of the Pontifical Institute in Rome kindly gave permission to publish the inscriptions mentioned above. As it was not possible to include them in this volume they will be published in an article in the BASOR », mais apparemment rien n'est paru dans BASOR.

²⁴ A. Joisten-Pruschke, *Das religiöse Leben der Juden von Elephantine in der Achämenidenzeit*, Göttinger Orientforschungen III. Reihe : Iranica NF 2, Wiesbaden, 2008, p. 41, 212 et 249 (Lettre de S. Pisano qui pense que « the fragments should be found in Cairo »).

Clermont-Ganneau et conservées à l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres²⁵. Dans la troisième lettre, envoyée le 25.03.1918 et reçue, « toute maculée par l'eau de mer », le 28.05.18, Ronzevalle mentionne « un tout petit fragment d'inscription lapidaire en caractères hébraïques du type de Siloé : deux lettres en tout B K » ; il ajoute « le morceau me paraît unique et vaut son pesant d'or ». Grâce aux indications précises données ensuite par Hélène Lozachmeur et à l'obligeance de Catherine Fauveaud²⁶, nous avons pu étudier cette lettre qui, en ce qui concerne ce fragment lapidaire inscrit, comporte trois précisions importantes :

- la localisation de la découverte de ce petit morceau : « à trente mètres du village et à 100 m. de la plate-forme » (bas de p. 1 et haut de p. 2 de la lettre) ;
- « toutes nos recherches pour retrouver d'autres fragments du même monument sont restées infructueuses » ;
- La lecture « B K », proposée à juste titre par Hélène Lozachmeur, a pris la place d'un petit croquis de Ronzevalle, croquis que nous reproduisons ici agrandi environ quatre fois (fig. 1).

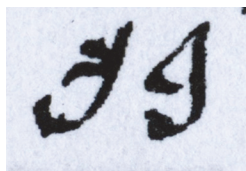


Figure 1

Pensant que, comme d'autres objets provenant d'Égypte et probablement d'Éléphantine²⁷, ce petit fragment pouvait avoir été déposé au musée de l'Institut Biblique Pontifical de Jérusalem après

²⁵ H. Lozachmeur, *La collection Clermont-Ganneau : ostraca, épigraphes sur jarre, étiquettes sur bois*, MAIBL 35, Paris, De Boccard, 2006, I, p. 66-67. Ces lettres sont classées « Cl.-G. 42 » : cf. É. Delange (éd.), *Les fouilles françaises d'Éléphantine (Assouan) 1906-1911. Les archives Clermont-Ganneau et Clédat*, MAIBL 46, Paris, 2012, I, p. 455.

²⁶ Nous exprimons toute notre reconnaissance à Hélène Lozachmeur et Catherine Fauveaud-Brassaud pour leur aide efficace.

²⁷ Cf. A. Lemaire, H. Lozachmeur, « Deux inscriptions araméenne du V^e siècle avant J.-C. », *Semitica* 27, 1977, p. 99-104.

l'avoir été dans celui de Rome²⁸, nous avons poursuivi l'enquête auprès du Rev. William J. Fulco, s. j. (Loyola Marymount University) en charge du musée depuis 1974 auquel j'exprime ici toute ma reconnaissance pour son aide rapide et efficace. Il m'a très aimablement répondu : « there is certainly no such item in the museum in Jerusalem²⁹ nor in the archive in Rome or elsewhere »³⁰. Sans connaître la lettre de Ronzevalle à Clermont-Ganneau avec croquis, il était même conduit à douter de l'existence de ce fragment. Le lendemain, il a eu la gentillesse de m'envoyer le pdf d'une lettre dactylographiée de Ronzevalle à R. Fernandez (alors supérieur de l'Institut Biblique Pontifical de Rome) reçue par ce dernier le 4 avril 1918. Trois lignes y concernent le fragment en question :

« Il y a 10 jours, nous avons attaqué un dernier point, très rapproché du village, et c'est là que nous avons découvert un fragment (deux lettres et ½) d'inscription lapidaire en caractères hébraïques antiques du type de l'inscription du Canal de Siloé »³¹.

Cette lettre confirme les données de la lettre à Clermont-Ganneau en précisant la date de la découverte et indiquant qu'il y avait aussi les traces d'une troisième lettre fragmentaire, malheureusement non identifiée.

Bien qu'il soit vraisemblable que Ronzevalle ait eu quelque peu tendance à exagérer l'importance de ce fragment en vue d'obtenir de nouveaux subsides et de pouvoir continuer la fouille, espoir qui se révéla vain, il me semble vraiment difficile de croire que Ronzevalle, qui avait une expérience épigraphique, ait pu totale-

²⁸ According to W. Fulco, « The Biblicum, in Rome began in 1909 whereas the house in Jerusalem did not open until 1928 so the items brought from Elephantine would have first gone to Rome rather than Jerusalem of course. Exactly what subsequently was sent from Rome to Jerusalem has always been unclear to me » (courriel du 01/04/2015).

²⁹ Une rapide visite au Musée de l'Institut Biblique Pontifical de Jérusalem le 15/06/2016 semble confirmer que cette pierre ne se trouve pas dans les objets exposés.

³⁰ Courriel du 31/03/2015.

³¹ Courriel du 01/04/2015.

ment inventer l'existence d'un tel fragment. De plus, si l'installation de la garnison judéenne à Éléphantine remonte au milieu du VII^e siècle av. n. è. comme le propose B. Porten avec de bons arguments³², un tel fragment paléo-hébreu pourrait facilement se comprendre vers le début de la présence de cette garnison : deuxième moitié du VII^e ou VI^e s. av. n. è.

Malheureusement, en l'absence de l'objet, d'une photo, d'un fac-similé et même des mesures de ce fragment, il semble vain de chercher à préciser davantage.

³² B. Porten, *Archives from Elephantine*, Berkeley / Los Angeles, 1968, p. 8-16 ; idem, « Settlement of the Jews at Elephantine and the Aramaeans at Syene », dans O. Lipschits, J. Blenkinsopp (éd.), *Judah and the Judeans in the Neo-Babylonian Period*, Winona Lake, 2003, p. 451-470, spéc. 457-461.

Bol magique avec inscription araméenne

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Abstract. *Publication of a new Jewish Aramaic magic bowl in favor of Aḥa son of Milky. It mentions the angels Sarapiel and the trilogy (Gabriel, Michael and Raphael) as well as the demons Shamish, “the son of the roofs”, Legion (cf. Mark 5:9) and Marbel.*

Ce bol magique¹ mesure 17 cm de diamètre et 7 cm de hauteur et a été restauré à partir de dix fragments. Il est écrit en spirale à

¹ Ce bol magique fait partie de l'ancienne collection Jean-Guy Kauffmann, aujourd'hui association « Bible & Civilisations ». Nous remercions Jean-Guy Kauffmann de nous avoir permis de l'étudier et de le publier. Abréviations :

ABS : S. Shaked, J. N. Ford and S. Bhairo, with contributions from M. Morgenstern and N. Vilozy, *Aramaic Bowl Spells. Jewish Babylonian Aramaic Bowls*, Leiden, 2013.

AITN : J. A. Montgomery, *Aramaic Incantation Texts from Nippur*, Publication of the Babylonian Section 3, Philadelphia, 1913.

AMB : J. Naveh – S. Shaked, *Amulets and Magic Bowls. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Leiden, 1985.

CAIB : C. D. Isbell, *Corpus of the Aramaic Incantation Bowls*, Dissertation Series 17, Missoula, 1975.

CAMIB : J. B. Segal with a contribution of E. C. D. Hunter, *Catalogue of the Aramaic and Mandaic Incantation Bowls in the British Museum*, London, 2013.

CMB : D. Levene, *A Corpus of Magic Bowls. Incantation Texts in Jewish Aramaic from the Late Antiquity*, London / New York / Bahrain, 2003.

CSIB : M. Moriggi, *A Corpus of Syriac Incantation Bowls. Syriac Magical Texts from Late-Antique Mesopotamia*, Leiden, 2014.

JACT : D. Levene, *Jewish Aramaic Curse Texts from Late-Antique Mesopotamia, Magical and Religious Literature of Late Antiquity 2*, Leiden, 2013.

MSF : J. Naveh – S. Shaked, *Magic Spells and Formulae. Aramaic Incantations of Late Antiquity*, Jerusalem, 1993.

ZHS : C. Müller-Kessler, *Die Zauberschalentexte in der Hilprecht-Sammlung, Jena, und weitere Nippur-Texte anderer Sammlungen, Texte und Materiale der Hilprecht Collection 7*, Wiesbaden, 2005.

l'intérieur du bol en écriture judéo-araméenne en entourant certains mots, les noms d'anges², que nous soulignons dans la transcription³.

Transcription

1. QMY'H DH LḤTMWTHWN D'Ḥ' BR MLKY MN KL MYNY
SṬNY BŠMK ŠSRPY'L RḤW' MWMN'
2. 'L KL 'SYRY 'LM' QR' 'TYQR MN 'H' BR MLKY DMYT<Q>RY
GYY MN KL ḤRŠY WMN KL M'BDY BYŠ WMN KL MYNY
SṬ[N]Y
3. ŠMYŠ RB' WBR 'YGRY WMN KL KYSH KSYH WKS' GLY'
WKYSY' DYMM' WKYSYH DLYLH WMN RWḤ' LGYN
WMY[T]QRY' GYS' WMN ŠYD' RB' DBGW
4. B'RYN WMḤDR 'L KWLHYN 'YSKWPT' WKLHWN QṬLY
MRBYL MŠB'N' 'LYKWN BŠWM GBRY'L NYB'L WRP'L 'SYH
DY MSYRYN KL BNY 'YNŠ' BYDYHWN
5. 'MN 'MN SLH 'MN 'MN SLH (Signes magiques)

Traduction

- 1 Cette amulette est pour le scellement d'Aḥa fils de Milky contre toutes sortes de satans. Par ton nom Sarapiel l'esprit, je conjure
- 2 contre tous les attachés du monde, invoquant 'TYQR de la part d'Aḥa fils de Milky, surnommé Gayay, pour *éloigner* de toutes sorcelleries, de tout acte magique mauvais et de toutes sortes de satans :
- 3 Shamish le grand, et le fils des toits, et de tout coup caché et coup découvert, les coups du jour, les coups de la nuit, de l'esprit-légion, surnommé troupe, du grand démon qui est à l'intérieur

² Cette pratique est déjà connue par plusieurs inscriptions : cf., par exemple, AITN n° 7.

³ Nous remercions Madame Anne Amouroux pour les photographies.

- 4 des puits et entoure tous les seuils, et tous les tueurs de Marbel. Je vous adjure par le nom de Gabriel, *Michael* (!) et Raphael le guérisseur qui lient tous les fils de l'homme dans leurs mains.
- 5 Amen, amen, sélah. Amen, amen, sélah. (Sept fois un double signe « E », normal à gauche et inversé de droite à gauche, à droite).

Commentaire philologique

Ligne 1. DH est apparemment une variante du démonstratif féminin D⁴.

LḤTMWTHWN D'Ḥ' : le suffixe pluriel est ici suivi d'un nom au singulier : il y aurait donc une faute d'accord à moins que le suffixe pluriel ne vise les membres de la famille d'Aḥa, suivant les formules habituelles d'autres textes magiques similaires.

'Ḥ' : ce nom propre est déjà attesté sur un bol magique syriaque⁵.

MLKY est aussi déjà attesté dans CAIB n° 48:2⁶ ; on peut le rapprocher de MLK dans MSF A21, colonne de gauche, ligne 4.

Le nom et le patronyme sont aussi attestés en palmyrénien⁷ et dans l'onomastique juive de la diaspora orientale⁸.

SRPY'L : le scribe a, semble-t-il, d'abord commencé à écrire un Ṣ, puis s'est repris pour écrire un S. SRPY'L est déjà attesté sous cette forme dans deux bols magiques de Nippur⁹, dans MSF G26 II 4, ainsi que sur une amulette en argent¹⁰, et, sous la forme ŠRPY'L, sur deux bols magiques araméens du musée de Bagdad publiés

⁴ Attesté, par exemple, en ABS 9:18; 62:5.

⁵ CSIB n° 16,2,9.13.14. Cf. aussi ZHS 3A:9.

⁶ = C. H. Gordon, « Aramaic and Mandaic Magical Bowls », *Archiv Orientalni* 9, 1937, p. 84-106 : n° 7.

⁷ J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1971, p. 3 et 34.

⁸ I. Tal, *Lexikon of Jewish Names in Late Antiquity, Part IV. The Eastern Diaspora 330 BCE - 650 CE*, TSAJ 141, Tübingen, 2011, p. 56-59, 104-106.

⁹ AITN n° 14,5 et 19,8.

¹⁰ R. Kotansky, « Two Inscribed Jewish Aramaic Amulets from Syria », *IEJ* 41, 1991, p. 267-281, spéc. 278 (ligne 5). Cf. aussi P. Schäfer – S. Shaked, *Magische Texte aus der Kairoer Geniza II*, TSAJ 64, Tübingen, 1997, n° 24:1a:58, 42:1a:14.

récemment¹¹. Le nom de cet ange pourrait être à rapprocher des *šrāpīm* d'Isaïe 6,2, rattachés au verbe *šrp*, « brûler », ou du verbe syriaque *šrp*, « enfermer, bloquer »¹².

RHW' est probablement une faute de scribe par métathèse pour RWH' que l'on va retrouver ligne 3.

SRPY'L RWH'(!) peut être comparé à *šrpy'l mry dyn'*, « Sarapiel seigneur du jugement » dans CAIB 21:8 = AITN 19:8 et à *šrpy'l ml'kh*, « Sarapiel l'ange », sur des bols araméens publiés récemment¹³.

MWMN': le W et le ' sont difficiles à discerner et restent incertains.

Ligne 2. 'L KL 'SYRY 'LM', « contre tous les attachés du monde », peut être comparé à 'l kl 'q[r]y 'lm', dans les deux bols araméens publiés récemment.

'TYQR : les lettres T et Q sont assez semblables, cependant l'incurvation de la hampe du T est en faveur de l'identification de la deuxième lettre comme un T. 'TYQR reste énigmatique : pourrait-on le rattacher à *yqr*, « gloire » en le rapprochant, par exemple, du syntagme *ml'ky bny 'yqr'*, « les anges fils de la Gloire »¹⁴ ? Signalons que la racine QR' est parfois utilisée dans les textes magiques pour invoquer le mal contre les adversaires¹⁵.

DMYT<Q>RY : le scribe a probablement oublié le Q dont la forme est très proche de celle du T. Dans les textes magiques, on mentionne souvent le surnom qui était le moyen habituel de distinguer les homonymes.

¹¹ B. A. Al-Jubouri, « An Aramaic Incantation Bowl in Iraq Museum », *Sumer* 56, 2011, p. 25-30, spéc. 27, ligne 4 ; idem, « A New Aramaic Incantation Bowl », *Semitica* 57, 2015, p. 211-216, spéc. 214.

¹² Pour ce verbe, cf. CSIB, p. 24.

¹³ *Sumer* 56, 2011, p. 25, ligne 4 ; *Semitica* 57, 2015, p. 213, ligne 4. Cf. aussi CMB M145:2, M163:4.

¹⁴ CMB 163:13.

¹⁵ Voir G. Arousamra, « Une nouvelle coupe araméenne », dans J.-M. Durand, A. Jacquet (éd), *Magie et divination dans les cultures de l'Orient*, Cahiers de l'Institut du Proche-Orient Ancien du Collège de France 3, Paris, 2010, p. 109-121, spéc. 117.

GY, peut-être d'origine iranienne¹⁶ à moins qu'il ne s'agisse d'une transcription du nom latin Gaius¹⁷, est déjà attesté dans un bol magique araméen¹⁸.

MN KL ḤRŠY : il manque un verbe avant MN afin d'exprimer le mouvement, l'éloignement des démons, à moins de supposer le verbe être : « qu'Aḥa ... (soit) loin de ... ». ḤRŠY peut être comparé à ḥršyn dans le bol araméen publié récemment au sein d'une énumération comprenant aussi šṭny[n]¹⁹.

Ligne 3. ŠMYŠ, « Shamish », est un démon assez fréquent dans les bols magiques : c'est le dieu soleil (šamaš écrit šmys²⁰). ŠMYŠ RB', « Shamish le grand », peut être comparé à mry' šmys dans CSIB 8:2-3 et à šmys mlk' d'lhy dans CMB M163:4 ; JACT p. 100.

WBR 'YGRY, « et le fils des toits ». Cette expression²¹, souvent au pluriel²², désigne l'esprit des toits et contraste, à la fin de la ligne, avec DBGW B'RYN, « qui est à l'intérieur des puits ». Les esprits des toits sont au nombre de sept (CAIB 53:2: wšb'h bny 'ygrwry) et résident sur les toits : rwḥ' dškb' bn 'ygr (CMB M156:5; ABS 1:5; 2:6 ...). Ils semblent liés à l'épilepsie²³ suivant une interprétation déjà attestée en akkadien²⁴.

KYSH KSYH WKS' GLY': kysh/, « coup », peut être relié au verbe kss, « battre, frapper, blâmer, reprocher, faire honte, re-

¹⁶ Cf. Gai, Gaya- dans F. Justi, *Iranisches Namenbuch*, Hildesheim, 1963 (= Marburg, 1895), p. 108b, 119a, 128b.

¹⁷ Cf. J. K. Stark, *Personal Names in Palmyrene Inscriptions*, Oxford, 1971, p. 13 et 81 : G'YS, GYS, GY.

¹⁸ D. W. Myhrman, « An Aramaic incantation Text », dans *Hilprecht Anniversary Volume. Studies in Assyriology and Archaeology*, London, 1909, p. 342-351 : lignes 3.9 et p. 348.

¹⁹ *Semitica* 57, 2015, p. 213, ligne 5.

²⁰ Cf. CSIB 1:7 ; JACT, p. 85 (VA 2492:4), 117-118 (039A:5,14), 133 (YBC 2393:2) ; AMB B13:11.21 ; ZHS 41f:41 (š'myš).

²¹ Cf. CAIB 41:10, 47:2.

²² Cf., par exemple, bny' 'ygr : ABS 59:3 ; bny 'ygr : CAMIB 46A:5 ; bny 'ygryn CAMIB 42A:6.

²³ T. Kwasman, « The Demon of the Roof », dans I. Finkel, M. J. Geller (éd.), *Disease in Babylonia*, Cuneiform Monographs 36, Leiden, 2007, p. 160-186, spéc. 165-169, 180-183.

²⁴ M. Stol, *Epilepsy in Babylonia*. Cuneiform Monographs 2, Groningen, 1993, p. 16-19, spéc. 18.

prendre ». Ce verbe peut être utilisé au participe *pe'al* et *haphel* (CSIB 27:2-3) et comme verbe ou nom au singulier ou pluriel dans MSF 17:2.3 (*kys*), 19:6 (*kysyn*) et 9 (*kysy*).

KL KYSH KSYH WKS' GLY' WKYSY' DYMM' WKYSYH DLYLH: dans cette expression, le scribe utilise indistinctement un H ou un ' à la fin des mots.

LGYN, « Légion », est expliqué par le mot suivant GYS', « la troupe »²⁵, qu'on peut comparer à l'explication de l'Évangile de Marc 5:9 : « Mon nom est Légion car nous sommes nombreux » (cf. aussi 5:15 et Luc 8:30). Ce nom de démon ne semble pas attesté dans les bols magiques mais il est associé au roi Salomon et à son pouvoir magique dans le Testament de Salomon 11²⁶.

WMY<T>QRY' : il faut apparemment restituer un T devant le Q, le scribe ayant tendance à confondre ces deux lettres (*supra* : ligne 2).

DBGW B'RYN, « à l'intérieur des puits » : le W est nettement séparé du B tandis que le Y et surtout le N final restent incertains.

Ligne 4. MḤDR²⁷ 'L : « encercler, tourner contre ».

'YSKWPT' : ce mot est généralement écrit avec un Q : 'ysqwpt', mais l'alternance Q/K y est déjà bien attestée²⁸.

WKLHWN QṬLY²⁹ MRBYL est de lecture pratiquement certaine.

MRBYL était déjà attesté trois fois dans AITN 6:7-8 et Montgomery (p. 143) le déclarait « wholly obscure ». Il apparaît parfois associé à « Shamish » et à d'autres divinités/démons d'origine

²⁵ Le mot GYS désigne déjà la troupe (des démons) dans AMB B13:6 ; CSIB 32:4.

²⁶ D. C. Duling, « Testament of Solomon (First to Third Century A.D. », dans J. H. Charlesworth (éd.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha I, Apocalyptic Literature and Testaments*, London, 1983, p. 935-987, spéc. 972-973. Cf. H. D. Betz, « Legion », dans K. van der Torn et al. (éd.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden, ²1999, p. 507-508.

²⁷ Pour le verbe ḤDR, voir G. Abousamra, « A New Manichean Incantation Bowl », dans C. B. Horn, S. H. Griffith (éd.), *Biblical & Qur'anic Traditions in the Middle East*, Eastern Mediterranean Texts and Contexts 2, Warwick, Rhode Island, Abelian Academic, 2016, p. 242.

²⁸ Cf., par exemple, ABS, p. 281.

²⁹ Pour ce verbe, voir G. Abousamra, « A Syriac Magic Bowl », *The Harp* 25, 2010, p. 193.

babylonienne³⁰. Après C. Müller-Kessler³¹, on peut proposer de le comprendre composé de deux éléments : MR et BYL, soit « maître Bel », soit, plutôt, d'après le babylonien, *māru*, « fils de Bel », c'est à dire Nabu. Cette interprétation semble d'autant plus vraisemblable que Bel est déjà bien attesté dans les bols magiques³².

NYB'L représente la lecture matérielle et doit apparemment³³ être corrigé en MYK'L ou, plutôt MK'L car le scribe a confondu les deux traits du M avec les deux lettres N et Y. On obtient ainsi la trilogie traditionnelle : Gabriel, Michael et Raphael³⁴.

'SYH est apparemment un qualificatif³⁵ de Raphael : « le guérisseur »³⁶, alors qu'il est qualifié de *b'l trpw'yt*, « maître de guérison » dans le bol araméen publié récemment³⁷ ou de *rb 'swt'*, « maître de la guérison » sur une amulette judéo-araméenne³⁸, tandis que c'est Michael qui est qualifié de 'sy' dans CSIB 6:7.

DY MSYRYN KL BNY 'YNS' BYDYHWN peut être rapproché de CSIB 13:7 : *msyryn 'bd' byd mrhwn*, « ils lient les esclaves dans la main de leur maître ».

La finale classique des bols magiques, « Amen, Amen, Sélah » est ici répétée deux fois. Cette double formule est suivie de sept fois deux doubles signes « E » dont celui de droite est inversé de droite à gauche

³⁰ Cf., par exemple, CAMIB 39A:5.14, 47A:4.

³¹ ZHS p. 72 à 17:3.

³² Cf., par exemple, JACT, p. 85 (VA 2492:5), 117-118 (039A:5,14), 133 (YBC 2393:3) ; CAMIB 36A:16, 39A:5.14, 47A:4.

³³ On note cependant la mention d'un ange NBY'L dans MSF G22 I 13 mais dans un contexte différent de la trilogie.

³⁴ Cf., par exemple, CMB M50:7, M102:11, M155:7 ; CSIB 6:7, 18:10, 48:2 ; JACT, p. 23 (VA 2484:15,20), 47 (VA 2416:19), 53 (VA 2434:10-11), 58 (VA 2424:9) ; ZHS 11d:10 ; IEJ 41, 1991, p. 275, lignes 2-3 ; Sumer 56, 2011, p. 26, lignes 6-7 ; Semitica 57, 2015, p. 213, ligne 7. Pour plus d'explication sur cette trilogie, voir G. Abousamra, *The Harp* 25, 2010, p. 7-8.

³⁵ Pour ce qualificatif, voir G. Abousamra, « Coupe de prière syriaque chrétienne », *Parole de l'Orient* 35, 2010, p. 28.

³⁶ Ibidem ; cf. aussi CMB M142 :5 : *rp'y'yl 'sy'* ; cf. aussi *rp'l 'syh rbh*, « Raphael grand guérisseur », dans M. J. Geller, « More Magic Spells and Formulae », BSOAS 60, 1997, p. 331, ligne 4.

³⁷ Semitica 57, 2015, p. 213, ligne 7.

³⁸ R. Kotansky, IEJ 41, 1991, p. 277 (ligne 4).

Interprétation générale

Les formules d'incantation de ce bol magique se rattachent tout à fait à la tradition magique judéo-araméenne indiquée par l'écriture même si elle a aussi des correspondances dans les bols magiques syriaques. Le nom propre du bénéficiaire et son patronyme sont clairement ouest-sémitiques et l'invocation de la trilogie angélique biblique et post-biblique traditionnelle, Gabriel, Michael et Raphael³⁹ va dans le même sens. Le quatrième ange, Sarapiel, semble propre aux textes magiques. Les noms propres des démons Shamish et Légion sont déjà connus. Bien que d'origine latine, le démon Légion n'était pas étranger au monde ouest sémitique du début de notre ère comme le montre l'Évangile de Marc 5,9.

Ce qui surprend ici c'est la graphie NYB'L pour l'ange MK'L bien connu par ailleurs comme membre de la trilogie angélique principale. S'agit-il d'une déformation volontaire et dans quel but ? Ou d'une grossière erreur du scribe qui aurait mal lu son modèle ? Bien que relativement bien écrit, ce scribe semble aussi commettre d'autres erreurs comme la confusion des formes de T et Q et la métathèse RHW' au lieu de RWH', sans compter les nombreux pluriels en -Y qui peuvent refléter la prononciation de l'époque.

³⁹ Cf., par exemple, J. J. Collins, "Gabriel", M. Machi, "Michael", "Raphael", dans K. van der Torn et al. (éd.), *Dictionary of Deities and Demons in the Bible*, Leiden / Grand Rapids, ²1999, p. 338-339, 569-572, 688.



New evidence from a Safaitic inscription for a late velar/uvular realization of *š in Aramaic¹

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Résumé. Le nom divin *rqy*, attesté pour la première fois dans une inscription safaitique de la région du Jebel Qurma, pourrait être une aramatisation du théonyme arabe bien connu *Rḏy/Rḏw*. La graphie *q* suggère en outre une réalisation autre que ‘ayn pour la latérale emphatique proto-sémitique *ḳ* à la fin du premier millénaire av. J.-C. en araméen de l’Arabie septentrionale.

Keywords: *ḳād, ruḏaw, Safaitic inscriptions, Aramaic phonology, Jebel Qurma*

1. Introduction

One of the characteristic features of Old Aramaic is the orthographic representation of the reflex of the Proto-Semitic (PS) glottalized lateral affricate *š [tʰ] with the *q* glyph: *ʾrq* ‘land’ ← PS *ʾaršum. This distinguishes the language from other Northwest Semitic groupings, such as Ugaritic and Canaanite, where this sound is represented orthographically with the glyph signifying

¹ A draft of this article was posted on Academia.edu using the website’s session tool, which allows one’s followers to comment on the article. I owe thanks to the following scholars for their helpful input, corrections, and even interesting discussions of tangential issues (in chronological order of posting): Uri Horesh, Charles Häberl, Sigrid Kjaer, Harald Samuel, Tania Notarius Veviuurko, Ursula Schattner-Rieser, Mila Neishtadt, Marijn van Putten, Benjamin Suchard, Kevin van Bladel, Anthony Grant, David Kiltz, Aren Wilson-Wright, Miguel Valério, David Wilmsen, Francesco Grande, Lameen Souag, and Adam Strich. This research was supported by the NWO-funded project *Landscapes of Survival*, 360-63-100.

PS *š [ts'].² Spellings with the *q* glyph eventually give way to spellings with an 'ayn, e.g. ʔr' 'land'; these begin to appear at the end of the sixth century BCE (Beyer 1984: 101).

It is commonly accepted today that the phonetic realization behind this orthographic convention was a glottalized velar or uvular affricate, *[kx'] or *[qχ'] (Kogan 2011:99). This reconstruction is further supported by transcriptions in Cuneiform, where the phoneme is given with ḪV and QV signs. Kogan (ibid.) summarizes the chain of development as follows:³

Proto-Semitic	pre-Old Aramaic	Old Aramaic	Imperial Aramaic	Middle Aramaic
[tʃ']	[kʃ']	[kx']	[χ]	[ʃ]

While the interchange between both spelling conventions -*q* and ʕ- is found as early as the 6th c. BCE, the Amherst Papyrus 63 (~early 3rd c. BCE) indicates that, at least in Egyptian Aramaic, the uvular and affricate quality of *š obtained, as the Demotic signs *ḥ*, *ḥ*, and *k* are used to represent the phoneme.⁴ To my knowledge, this is the latest example of a non-'ayn pronunciation of this phoneme in Aramaic.⁵ In this paper, I will give one small piece of evidence that *could* suggest a uvular reflex of *š obtained in some form of Aramaic in the southern Levant even later.

² Note the recent discussion on the genetic affiliation of Samalian (Noorlander 2012).

³ See Kogan (2011) for a complete bibliography.

⁴ On this text, see Steiner (1997).

⁵ Another late attestation may be found in the 4th c. BCE Ostraca from Idu-mea, where the word for 'wood' is spelled ʔq(n), but this is probably to be interpreted as an orthographic relic, rather than reflecting an archaic pronunciation. See Notarius (2006); I thank Dr. T. Notarius Vevirko for this reference. Of course, archaic spellings with *q* survive in frequent words long after the [ʃ] pronunciation emerges, even up to the present day in Mandaic, as Prof. C. Häberl informs me.

2. The Inscription

The inscription under study comes from the area of Jebel Qurma, about 30km east of the town of Al-Azraq in the Jordanian panhandle (Figure 1). It was discovered by the NWO-funded project *Landscapes of Survival* at the site QUR 276, and was given the number RA 33.⁶ The Safaitic inscription expresses a short prayer for rain in Old Arabic. The text was incised with a thin instrument on a basalt rock in a curving fashion, and is about 30 cm long. The text reads:

QUR 276, RA 33 (images 2-4)

l brzt bn hlht w ʿgz h- sʿmy sʿnt myt ʾbd w h rqy rwḥ
By Brzt son of Hlht and the rain was held back the year ʾbd died
so, O Rqy, send the winds!

2.1. Grammatical Commentary

The expression ʿgzt/ʿgz h- sʿmy ‘the rain was held back’⁷ is common in Safaitic inscriptions, e.g. HaNSB 16: *w ʿgzt h- sʿmy kll h- sʿnt* ‘and the rain was held back the entire year’. Descriptions of poor meteorological conditions are usually followed by a prayer for rain to *Bʿlsʿmn* (Baʿal-Šamīn), the rain god, to send the winds, *rwḥ*. This author, however, appeals to another deity, a previously unattested *Rqy*. While it is possible that *Rqy* is a new deity altogether, or perhaps an epithet meaning ‘high’ (< √RQY ‘to ascend’ (Lane, 1140a)), it is more likely that we are dealing with a variant of the common deity *Rḏy*, mentioned nearly 200 times in the Safaitic inscriptions.⁸ *Rḏy* itself seems to be a by-form of the more commonly attested deity, *Rḏw*, found in some 320 inscriptions. Both terms derive from the root √RḏW ‘satisfaction, benevolence’. A full

⁶ See: <http://www.jebel-qurma.nl/>

⁷ Compare with CAr *ʿaḡzun* ‘The being, or becoming, behind or behindhand, or backward... holding back, hanging back...’ (Lane, 247c). All translations of cited Safaitic inscriptions are my own.

⁸ According to Bennett (2014: 45), *Rḏy* is the third most invoked god in the Safaitic inscriptions, while *Rḏw* is the second and *Lt* is the first.

review of the literature on the relationship between *Rḏw* and *Rḏy* would take us too far afield,⁹ but one common view is to consider the two a male and female pair, similar to *han-ʿaktab* and *al-kutbāʿ* (Winnett and Reed 1970: 75-76). The trouble with this view is that there are no nominal forms where a male and a female are distinguished by a glide, *w* and *y* respectively. Thus, it is unclear how this would work in morphological terms. Healey, in his review of the opinions on the gender of the deity, summons some evidence for its identification as a female, but the Safaitic data he cites can be disputed. A female figure appears alongside one inscription mentioning the god *Rḏw* (C 4351), but it is impossible to know if the two carvings on the rock are related. Healey interprets the ‘verb’ *ʿwdt* in C 5011¹⁰ as a third person feminine singular, but it is also possible to take it as an infinitive of command or even a second person, where gender would be unclear. A strong piece of evidence against *Rḏw* being a female comes from two inscriptions from southern Syria which read:

AWS 283: ʿlt bnt rḏw flt m sʿnt h- ḥrb flt ʿl bn ḥzr bn ḥdy bn wkyt
 ‘Allāt daughter of Roṣaw deliver ʿl son of Ḥzr son of
 Ḥdy son of Wkyt from the year of war’

AWS 291: ʿlt bnt rḏw ḡwt -h ḥnd bn ḥdrt bn ʿbrr w l h h- dr
 ‘Allāt daughter of Roṣaw remove affliction from Ḥnd
 son of Ḥdrt son of ʿbrr while he is in this place’

The lineages in the Safaitic inscriptions are all patrilineal. If divine lineages followed the pattern of human ones, then *Rḏw* must be identified as a male deity, in which case the *ʿwdt* mentioned above must be interpreted as an infinitive or a second person form.

Bennett (2014) has shown that both deities have yet to appear together in a single inscription, which further supports the idea that they are phonological variants of the same name. While the

⁹ But see Healey (2001: 94-95) for a discussion on the name and its relationship with the Nabataean god *Dusares*.

¹⁰ The inscription reads: *l mtl bn qn bn ʿmr bn ʿsd w ʿwdt rḏw* ‘By Mtl son of Qn son of ʿmr son of ʿsd and may *Rḏw* grant return’.

root has an etymological *w* in third position, the glides commonly merge to /y/ in final position in Safaitic, either as a phonological process or a result of morphological leveling (Al-Jallad 2015a: 50). Thus, *Rdy* would appear to be the outcome of this development, and therefore, the form would reflect a later, dialectal variant of the original *Rḏw*.

3. The pronunciation of *Rḏw/Rdy* in Safaitic¹¹

With the above grammatical details established, we can now turn to the pronunciation of this theonym in the dialects the Safaitic script expresses, and only then can we attempt to understand the variant form *Rqy* in the present inscription.

The name *Rḏw* is first attested in transcription in the Annals of Esarhadden, the Neo-Assyrian monarch who ruled from 680 to 669 BCE.¹² The deity was carried off as booty from the North Arabian oasis, Dumah, where incidentally, three inscriptions carved in the local script record invocations to *Rḏw*, but it is impossible to know whether these were contemporary with the Assyrian conquest of the oasis.¹³ The name of the idol is transcribed as *ru-ul-da-a-a-ú*, which many have correctly noted points towards a lateral realization of PS *š. The sequence of *a-a-a-ú*, however, is more difficult to interpret. The sequence *da-a-a* could represent the syllables /dayy/ or /dāy/, both of which would point towards the variant *Ruḏay*. If this is the case, then the final *ú* must be interpreted as a case ending. This is curious in light of the fact that the previous deities whose names end in a diphthong lack such an *u*-ending, i.e., *Nu-ḥa-a-a* and *Da-a-a*. Thus, I would suggest that the final *u* in fact reflects an attempt to mark a final /w/. While the normal way of indicating the diphthong /aw/ would have been

¹¹ The discussion of the Cuneiform material in this section has benefited greatly from the comments of Prof. C. Häberl and Dr. D. Kiltz. All errors are my own, of course.

¹² See Borger (1956).

¹³ See Winnett and Reed (1970: 80, nos. 21–23)

Ca-u,¹⁴ it is possible that this scribe employed an idiosyncratic spelling, as this sound was foreign to Neo-Babylonian. While ad-hoc in some sense, this solution does allow us to connect the Cuneiform spelling with the name of the deity actually attested at Dumah. However, given that Ca-a-a is the normal way of representing a final Vy sequence, we must admit both possibilities.¹⁵

The representation of the emphatic lateral with the combination of the *l* and the DA-sign is also open to two interpretations. The DA-sign can represent both the voiced stop /d/ and the emphatic /ṭ/. If the former were intended, then it would seem to point to the fact that the dialect of this oasis had already developed pharyngealized realizations of the emphatics, as voice is not compatible with glottal closure. In this case, the transcription would reflect a phonetic realization [ruḷʕaw]. On the other hand, if the emphatic ṭ was intended, then the original glottalized realization could have obtained. The spelling of the plain lateral *ś [ṭ] as *lt* has been attested in Neo-Babylonian in the word *ba-al-tam-mu* = Hebrew *bāśām*, *Commiphora Opobalsamum* (Kogan 2011: 78), and so the spelling *ul-ṭa* may reflect an attempt to represent the corresponding glottalized consonant, [ṭʕ] or [ṭʕʕ]. Thus, the possible phonetic realizations of the cuneiform transcription are:

[ruṭʕaw]

[ruḷʕaw]

[ruṭʕay]

[ruḷʕay]

We cannot assume that the pronunciation of this word at Dumah in the 7th c. BCE would hold true for the dialect of the Harrah some seven centuries later. While there exist copious Greek transcriptions of Arabic names in the region, none, to my knowledge, contains the name of the deity *Rḏy*. However, the personal name *Rḏwt*, which is derived from the same root, is attested as

¹⁴ For example, the spelling *ia-ú-na-a-a* /yawnāya/ ‘Ionians’; I thank Dr. David Kiltz for this example.

¹⁵ As Prof. Van Bladel points out to me, another possible attestation of this name occurs in Herodotus 3.8, where it is spelled *Opotaλt* and *Opotaλ* in the manuscripts. Both forms, however, seem to be rather garbled and so it is probably unwise to base any linguistic conclusions on them.

Πασαουαθ.¹⁶ The use of Sigma, as I have argued elsewhere (Al-Jallad forthcoming, §3.7.4), points towards a voiceless lateral realization, possibly [(t)ʔ] or [ʔʰ]. In addition to this, we have the name of one of the large tribal confederacies, ʾl ḏf in transcription in Greek as Σαίφηνος.¹⁷ Thus we can be sure that the realization of the emphatic lateral in the dialects of the Harrah was voiceless, which permits the possibility of a glottalized realization.

4. The source and pronunciation of *Rqy*

Returning to the attestation in the present inscription, we can see that there is no evidence to assume that the reflex of the emphatic lateral was close in pronunciation to the *q*¹⁸ in either the Safaitic dialects or the dialect of Dumah, whence our earliest transcription of this name comes. It is, therefore, unlikely that the author of the present inscription would have confused the two sounds. Instead, the use of the *q* glyph must signal a different pronunciation altogether. I would therefore suggest that *Rqy* reflects an *Aramaic* calque of the Arabian theonym. Aramaic forms of Arabian theonyms, and vice versa, are attested and will be discussed below. But first, if this interpretation is correct, then it would mean that Arabic *Rḏy* was Aramaicized in a dialect in which the sound change [kxʰ] → [ʕ], or → [ɣ] for that matter, had not yet occurred. That is, from whatever Aramaic this word was drawn, it must have still have had a velar or uvular reflex of the emphatic lateral *š. Where to locate this Aramaic in space and time, however, is more difficult to establish.

We know that Aramaic was present or used in Arabia for the greater part of the 1st millennium BCE. If we chose an upper chronology, that is, should the source of this word be placed sometime during the Neo-Assyrian or Neo-Babylonian incursions into Arabia, then we can assume that the name of the deity was

¹⁶ For example, PAES III.a 308, 368, 448, 458, 491, 492, 569, 643.

¹⁷ See Macdonald, Al Muʿazzin, and Nehmé (1996: 483).

¹⁸ The *q* glyph signified either a [q] or [kʰ], as it is always transcribed in Greek with Kappa (Al-Jallad 2015a: 43).

Aramacized sometime in the middle of the first millennium BCE. How the name then diffused to the southern Levant is unclear. It is impossible to view the Old Arabic of the Safaitic inscriptions as having descended from the languages used at the oasis of Tayma, Taymanitic, or Dadanitic, neither in paleographic terms nor linguistically.¹⁹ Moreover, the deity *Rḏy* is not mentioned in the Taymanitic inscriptions, and so any argument for the Aramaicization of the term there comes from silence. A more likely candidate is Dumah; however, it is unclear what the relationship between the dialect of Dumah and Safaitic is, since the former is only known from three inscriptions, none of which yield any particularly informative features of grammar. Perhaps the greatest weakness in viewing an early North Arabian source for the name is the fact that there is so far no evidence for the Aramaicization of Arabian theonyms, or even personal names, in the inscriptions of those areas.

We can instead argue that *Rqy* is a local calque, originating in the southern Levant, where there is a precedent for the Aramaicization of Arabian gods. The Nabataean theonym *Dusares*, */*ḏū-šarē*/ (Nab. *Dwšr*ʿ; Saf./His. *ḏsʿr(y)*, Greek Δουσαρης), an epithet meaning ‘of the Šaray’, a mountain range near Petra, is etymologically Arabic. The shape of the relative-determinative pronoun /*ḏū*/ rules out an Aramaic origin, and the preservation of the initial interdental likewise disqualifies a Canaanite source, and so the name must find its source in a dialect of Old Arabic. In Safaitic, another spelling of this theonym is attested, *dsʿr*, with the loss of the initial interdental. There is no evidence so far that interdentals have been lost in Safaitic, and so this phenomenon must be attributed to the source of the name rather than the dialect of the inscriptions. Macdonald (2000: 48) hypothesized that the spelling *dsʿr* represents an Aramaicized form of this divine name. Both the Arabic and Aramaic forms are attested in theophoric names in Greek transcription—Arabic: Αβδουσαρης /*ʿabd-ḏū-šarey*/ and Aramaic: Αβδισαρ /*ʿabddišar*/ (Al-Jallad forthcoming, §5.1.2.1). The royal name *Hārīṭat* (= Αρετας) is also found in Arabic and Aramaic forms, *ḥrtt* and *ḥrtt/ḥrt* respectively.

¹⁹ On this, see Al-Jallad (2015a: §1.2)

The opposite phenomenon is attested with the theonym *Bʿlsʾmn*, where it is Arabicized in some inscriptions to *Bʿlsʾmy*.

It is difficult to date when the Aramaicization of the theonym *Dusares* would have taken place, but it is reasonable to assume that it occurred sometime during the existence of the Nabataean kingdom, so as early as the mid-second century BCE. If *Rḏy* was Aramaicized in the same context as *Dusares*, then we can cautiously argue that some form of Aramaic in use in this region retained a velar/uvular realization of *š a century later, if not more, than P. Amherst 63. The conventional chronology of the Safaitic inscriptions begins their production in the 1st c. BCE, which would push our date even later, but one must remember that this starting point is not based on any solid evidence, and so it is possible that the writing of Safaitic inscriptions extended much further into the past than this.

The Greek transcription of the Aramaic calque *dsʾr* as *Δισαρ* shows that the Arabian form was not simply pronounced as if it were Aramaic, but was etymologized, and the Aramaic relative pronoun *di* was substituted for the Arabic *dū* and the final long vowel was dropped. The same seems to have been true in the case of *Rḏy*. If Arabic /Roṣay/ were simply rendered with an Aramaic pronunciation, we would expect something like *Ršy* or perhaps even *Ršy*, if the lateral realization of *sʾ also obtained in the Aramaic of this region.²⁰ The spelling with *q* shows that speakers etymologized the name, and used the cognate Aramaic root. Aramaic personal names derived from the root *VRŠW* are attested in Cuneiform transcription as *ra-ḥi-a-nu* and *ra-qi-a-nu* (see Kogan 2011: 99 for a discussion and bibliography). With only one example so far, we can only guess as to whether or not similar fluctuation would have been present in Safaitic spellings. The use of *q*, however, can be explained in the broader context of the phonology of Old Arabic. The reflex of Proto-Semitic *ḥ in Safaitic was probably a front velar fricative, as authors chose to represent

²⁰ Macdonald (2000: 46) argues on the basis of the spelling of Aramaic *dsʾr* with *sʾ* rather than *sʾ*, which is usually used to render Aramaic [ʃ], that the Aramaic of the Hawran preserved the lateral quality of PS *sʾ rather than merging it with [ʃ].

this sound with the *spiritus asper* in Greek, rather than with χ (Al-Jallad 2015a: 42; Al-Jallad forthcoming, §3.2). This glyph could have been felt as unsuitable for the representation of the Aramaic velar or uvular reflex of *š. For one, such a sound must have been glottalized, as a pharyngealized **[kx̤], while possible, is unattested in the world's languages, and would therefore seem unlikely. There is some small evidence for a glottalized *q* [k'] in Safaitic (Al-Jallad 2015a: 43). If this is correct, then the *q* would have had two features in common with the Aramaic affricate [kx'], glottalization and a velar point of articulation, whereas *ḥ* would have had only one, thus making *q* the better choice to approximate this sound. Whatever interpretation we chose, we can be sure that *š had not yet become [ɣ] in the Aramaic from which this word was drawn, as Safaitic has a dedicated glyph for this sound, namely, *ḡ*.

5. Conclusion

This single Safaitic inscription furnishes some evidence for the velar/uvular realization of *š in an Aramaic dialect of the southern Levant or North Arabia persisting into the late first millennium BCE. The spelling with *q* further substantiates the phonetic realization of this phoneme as a glottalized velar or uvular affricate. Finally, this inscription provides the first example of the Aramaicization of the Arabic theonym *Rḏy*, a phenomenon paralleled in the two reflexes of the Nabataean divinity Dusares, Arabic *dū-šarey* and Aramaic *dī-s²ar*.

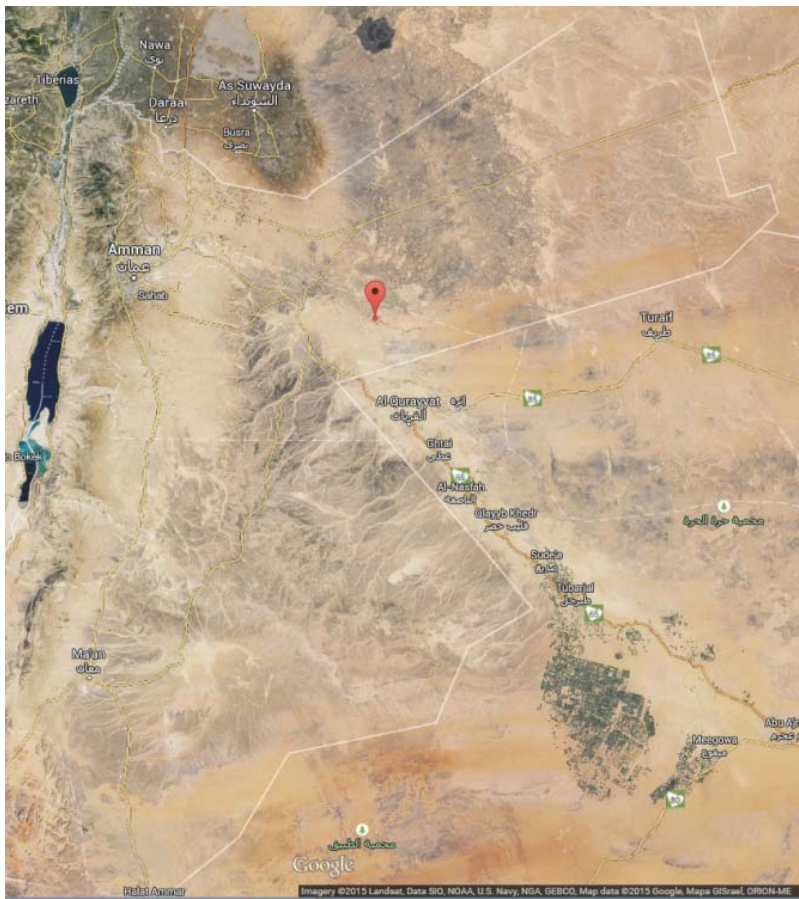


Figure 1. Map of Jordan with Jebel Qurma tagged



Figure 2. QUR 276.33, photograph by Peter Akkermans

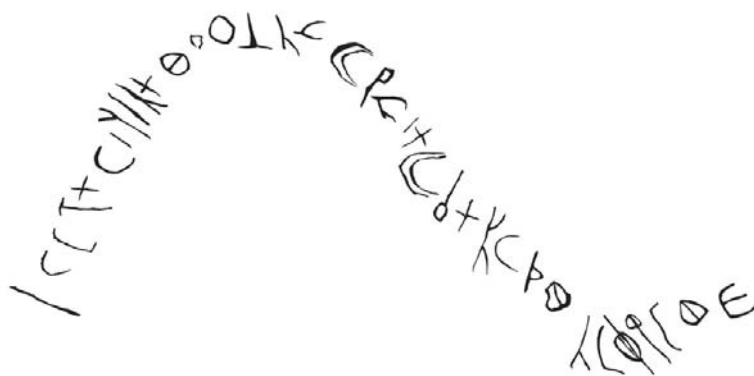


Figure 3. Tracing of QUR 276.33 by Ahmad Al-Jallad

Sigla

AWS

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The mystery of the dance: the Semitic etymological derivation of the Maltese root $\sqrt{ẓfn}$ [= $\sqrt{ẓfn}$] and its contribution to history

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Résumé. L'existence du verbe $\sqrt{ẓfn}$ en maltais au sens de « danser » et son usage réduit dans les autres dialectes arabes pose la question de son origine. Cet article tente de retracer les étymons de ce verbe en le comparant aux autres langues sémitiques et aux dialectes arabes. La réponse finale est surprenante.

1. Preface

The root $\sqrt{ẓfn}$ is found in some peculiar and rare examples in Classical Arabic dictionaries, but is not used presently in either Classical or Modern Arabic; its use is also restricted in some peripheral Modern Arabic dialects. It is striking that while Classical and Modern Arabic use the root $\sqrt{rqṣ}$ to denote the verb 'to dance' or 'dance' as a noun¹, the Maltese language, which absorbed a huge Arabic lexica and etymons, uses the root $\sqrt{ẓfn}$ [= $\sqrt{ẓfn}$], which acts paradigmatically in this language as a Semitic verb and not as a European loan verb². This root is deep-rooted in Maltese, with a wide spectrum of meanings in daily usage. In terms of dialect, Maltese is a Semitic language, some two thirds of its vocabulary

¹ Even very marginal Arabic dialects such as the Nigerian use this verb. See Alan S. Kaye, *Nigerian Arabic-English Dictionary* (Malibu: Undena Publications, 1986), v.2, p. 66. See also in Jonathan Owens *Arabic as a Minority Language* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2000), pp. 221-258.

² Mikiel Anton Vassalli mentions the root in his lexicon. See Mikiel *Lexicon ta' Mikiel Anton Vassalli bi preżentazzjoni u annotamenti ta' Frans Sammut*. (Malta: Marsa Press, 2002, p. 675).

being deriving from Arabic and the rest from Sicilian-Italian, Italian, English and other Norman languages that influenced the Maltese islands over time³. Normally, Maltese is regarded as a Maghrebi Arabic dialect, or more accurately as a development of Tunisian Arabic dialect, which has much in common with other North-African Arabic dialects, such as those of Morocco, Algeria and Libya.

This article strives to solve the mystery and find the etymological origins of *√zfn* in Semitic languages and in Arabic lexicography and at the same time to plot its hypothetical route to becoming familiarized in Maltese.

2. *√zfn* in contemporary Maltese⁴

As a verb: the root *√zfn* 'to dance' is used as a transitive verb in Maltese [perfect *zifen*, imperfect *jizfen*, pp. *mizfūn*]. In the first stem, the verb is used semantically with several idiomatic meanings apart from 'to dance', such as 'to cope with' or 'to fend for oneself', e.g. *jew indoqq jew niżfen* 'I can only cope with one thing at a time'; *it-tifel jitbellah u jien niżfen fin-nofs* 'my son does silly things and I have to face the music'; *l-ewwel qaluli biex nagħmel hekk u xhin inqala' l-inkwiet hallewni niżfen* 'they first told me to do that, but when I found myself in trouble they left me to fend for myself'. The second stem *zeffen* v.t. (pp. *m-*, *tizfin* v.n.) is used semantically based on the meaning of the first stem as 'to make someone dance' *ried ižeffinhom imma ma ridux* 'he wanted to make them dance, but they did not want to' or 'to involve someone in something' *meta jinqalagħlu xi haġa dejjem ižeffen lili* 'when he finds himself in trouble, he always involves me'. The fifth stem, *izzeffen* v.i. (<**tzeffen*), has three different meanings, all belonging to the same semantic field, 'to move in a lively way, quickly, up and down', e.g. *il-friegħi tas-siġar jižzeffnu mar-riħ* 'the branches of

³ See Joseph M. Brincat, *Maltese and other languages. A linguistic history of Malta* (Malta: Midsea Books., 2011), p. 407.

⁴ Joseph Aquilina, *Maltese-English Dictionary* (Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 1990), p. 1618.

the trees dancing in the wind'; 'to indulge in dancing or restless movements', e.g. *dit-tifla tiżżeffen il-ħin kollu għad issir ballerina* 'this girl performing dancing movements will one day become a ballet dancer'; 'to be involved in a matter just capriciously or maliciously', e.g. *thallix isem il-familja jżżeffen b'dan id-delitt* 'don't let the family name be involved in this crime'.

2.1.

As a noun or verbal noun: *żfin* 'dancing' e.g. *kien hemm daqq u żfin* 'there was music and dancing'; *żifna* (pl. ~iet) 'a dance', e.g. *la aħna fiż-żifna niżfnu* 'once we are involved we have to face the situation'; as a diminutive: *żfejna* (pl. ~iet) 'small dance'; *żeffien* (pl. ~a) 'dancer'; *żeffieni* (f. ~ija; pl. ~in) 'fond of dancing'.

2.2.

One can trace the semantic connection between the Maltese \sqrt{zfn} and \sqrt{zff} , as *iżiffja* means 'to blow (wind)', e.g. *ir-riħ qed jizziffja* 'the wind is blowing' and *żiffa* means 'a breeze', e.g. *żiffa tal-baħar* 'sea-breeze'.

3. \sqrt{zfn} in Classical and Andalusian Arabic

3.1. The Classical dictionaries

Ibn Manḏūr⁵ denotes that the word *الرَّفْنُ* (رَفَنَ يَرْفِنُ رَفْنًا) in Classical Arabic means 'similar to dance' (شبيه بالرقص). Hence we can understand that the author of the *Lisān al-'Arab* finds the root \sqrt{zfn} peculiar and not entirely equivalent to \sqrt{zff} . The *Lisān* refers to *الرَّفْنُ* as an homonym or sometimes *الرَّفْن* as a word that has its etymon

⁵ Muḥammad Ibn Manḏūr, *Lisān al-'Arab* (Beirut: Dār 'Ihyā' at-Turāṭ al-'Arabī, 1988), VI, p. 58.

in Oman, which has a quite different meaning: 'an awning near the ocean which casts shadow and protects from the burning sun and the humidity of the sea'. This remark is of great importance here since Ibn Manḏūr sees the possibility of a foreign non-Arabic etymon in this word. The word's eccentricity is emphasized again as the author of the *Lisān* turns immediately to a *Hadith* tradition of 'Ā'isha which says *فَدِمَ وفدُ الحبشة فجعلوا يزفنون ويلعبون* 'a delegation of Abyssinians came and they began to dance and play'. This tradition plays a tremendous part in solving the mystery of the ancient etymon of زَفَن/زَفْن, since it implies that the origins of this verb are in Abyssinia; hence we do not find here the normal Arabic verb *√rqṣ* 'to dance', because the way of dancing is alien and therefore the author of the *Lisān* uses the formulation 'similar to dance' (شبيه بالرقص). This source refers also to the word زَفَّانٌ⁶ which means 'a dancer', similar to the Maltese *zeffien*. Another entry in the *Lisān* is *رجل إزفنة* 'a man that tends to go quickly'. This word is bound semantically to the quick movements of the dance and features also in another entry in this Classical dictionary, very close semantically: *رجل زيفن* which denotes a strong man, yet very agile in his movement.⁷

The semantic use of زَفَن appears in a tradition called *Hadith* 'Abdallah Ibn 'Amr which uses four words *والزفن والمزاهر والكنارات*. These are probably foreign words denoting dance and musical instruments and do not have an Arabic etymology, e.g. the word *كنارات*, which is used in Aramaic כְּנָרָא (and also in Hebrew⁸ כִּנּוֹר. This emphasizes that the origin of the word زَفَن is not Arabic and therefore it is not used extensively.

In another entry in his dictionary that semantically relates to 'dance' as a noun, namely *الحنْبَشَةُ*, Ibn Manḏūr writes that it means

⁶ See also *Tāġ al-'Arūs*: زَفَّانٌ: 'one who tends to dance a lot', e.g. *الصوفية زفانة حفانة* 'the Soufis are inclined to dance a lot and to eat while amusing'.

⁷ The dictionary of al-Fayrūzabādī does not give any information additional to that in *Lisān*. Ibn Manḏūr cites Ibn Ġinniyy, who says that زَيَّفُون is the morphological *فَيْعُول* form deriving from the word زَفَن, because زَيَّفُون is also a sort of a movement accompanied by a voice. In this poem, we understand زَيَّفُون as an infrequent adjective used in the expression *فؤس زَيَّفُون*, which denotes a very swift bow used in war.

⁸ Ibn Manḏūr, in the entry *√knr*, concurs that it appears in the Bible.

البادية 'the play of the maid servants in the desert', and then goes on to interpret the word 'to play': الحنبشة المشي 'التصفيق والرقص' *hanbaša* means moving [literally: going] [while] clapping hands and dancing'. It is unexpected that the name of Abyssinia in Arabic, namely الحبشة, a geographic location outside Arabia, is attributed to this special way of dancing. This emphasizes the contents of the *Hadith* tradition of 'Ā'isha about the delegation of Abyssinians who came and played in a unique way, which was not apparently known among the Arabs.

Az-Zabīdī in *Tāǧ al-'Arūs*⁹ refers to the same *Hadith* traditions as the *Lisān*, but he adds a few more lexical items derived from \sqrt{zfn} :

زافنة: 'a she-male that has crooked legs and looks like dancing while walking';

الزفان: 'an equivalent word for الزف dance'.

We understand from Ibn Fāris' dictionary¹⁰ that \sqrt{zfn} has no Arabic etymology, and from his comments it becomes clear that الزف is actually used only very rarely: الزاء والفاء والنون ليس عندي أصلاً؛ ولا فيه ما يحتاج اليه. يقولون: الزف: الرقص. ويقولون الزيف: الشديد. وليس هذا بشيء 'I do not have any etymon for the root \sqrt{zfn} and it is rare in use. One can say indeed that the meaning of الزف is *dance* and one can say that زيف means *a strong [man]* but neither has an actual anchoring'. The same quotation of the two words الزف and زيف appears in al-Ġawhārī's dictionary, but he does not make the same remark that appears in *Maqāyīs al-Luġa* about these two words.

3.2. \sqrt{zfn} in Classical Arabic Poetry

There are only two different references in two verses in Classical Arabic Poetry to \sqrt{zfn} , both from relatively unknown poets. The first quotation is from 'Uqaybil Ibn Šihāb, who wrote a *Dīwān*, yet only three verses have survived to our time. He describes the warring of al-Ḥaġġāġ Ibn Yūsuf at-Taqaḥī (661–714 AD) against the

⁹ Muḥibb ad-Dīn Muḥammad Murtaḍā az-Zabīdī, *Tāǧ al-'Arūs min Ġawāhir al-Qāmūs* (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1994), xviii, pp. 260–261.

¹⁰ Abū Ḥusayna Aḥmad Ibn Fāris, *Mu'ġam Maqāyīs al-Luġa* (Beirut: Dār al-Ġil, 1991), iii, p. 14.

revolt of Ibn az-Zubayr (624–692 AD) around 690 AD. This poet belonged to the Kalb tribe which came originally from Yemen and after the collapse of Ma'rib dam moved northwards to Syria (Bilād aš-Šām). He describes in one of the three verses the fierce battle, as the pro-Umayyad al-Ḥaġġāġ, angered at being prevented by Ibn az-Zubayr from performing the Ḥaġġ, bombarded Mecca, going so far as to target the Ka'bah. This verse reads

خرجنا لبيت الله نرمي ستوره
وأحجاره زفن الولائد في العرس¹¹

'We went out to the house of God {the Ka'bah} and bombarded its curtains

And its stones, as the *Zafn* of the maids at a wedding'.

From this verse we obtain a few more intimations about the meaning and etymology of *Zafn*. The bombardment of the Ka'bah is described as heavy, namely it denotes the rapid offensive. We saw in the *Lisan* some examples of the use of *√zfn*, e.g. رجل إزفنة or رجل زفن 'a man that tends to go quickly or very agilely in his movements'. The word ولائد can frequently denote 'black maids' who came usually from Abyssinia, Oman or other geographical areas on the Horn of Africa. These maids, as they are described here, would go to a wedding to dance, sing and entertain the invited guests.

The other verse, from about 1250 AD, is from the relatively unknown poet aš-Šarṣarī, who died in Baghdad in 1258, probably killed by the Mongolians. He says

ولا عباساً فظاً غليظاً فلم يلم
حبوشاً على زفن ولا عاباً أنجشاً¹²

'And not even a gloomy, tough and a vulgar [person] that had not Criticized an Abyssinian for his *Zafn* and had not condemned the Abyssinian King'.

¹¹ This verse appears in the CD Rom of the Encyclopedia of Poetry.

¹² This verse appears in the CD Rom of the Encyclopedia of Poetry.

In this verse we witness a clear discrimination against the black-skinned Abyssinians whom even very common people can defame regarding their habits of *Zafn*. Here it most likely means ‘vulgar dances’ or ‘dances of vulgar people’, which are foreign to the Arabs. He does not slander the Abyssinian king, which implies that even the Abyssinian king is used to these dancing performances which are surely familiar and greatly treasured in his royal courtyard, but disregarded and disdained by even very coarse and vulgar Arabs. From here we can understand that the *Zafn* dances were merely seen as alien by the Arabs.

3.3. \sqrt{zfn} in Andalusian Arabic

Corriente¹³ points out in his dictionary of Andalusian Arabic that \sqrt{zfn} is found in entries *zafna*, *zafānatun*, *zaffānun*, all relating to the meaning ‘do dance’. He also remarks that etymologically this root is from South Arabian ‘stock’. This observation is highly significant as we will observe later in this article.

4. The etymology of \sqrt{zfn} in other modern or Post-Classical Arabic dialects

Additionally to Maltese, \sqrt{zfn} is attested in two modern Arabic dialect groups: that on the southern edge of the Arabian Peninsula and that in the western parts of the Maghrebic Arabic dialects-speaking area. Note that in various Arabic dialects, e.g. those of the Syro-Palestinian group, the basic biradical/geminated root \sqrt{zff} , which relates to ‘singing, dancing or doing dance’ at a wedding, is widely used.

¹³ F. Corriente, *A Dictionary of Andalusian Arabic* (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997), p. 231.

4.1. Modern Yemeni dialects

In Piamenta's dictionary¹⁴, the discussed root features in the entry زَفَّافَةٌ (pl. -ات) which means 'a woman who sings at a wedding and makes the bride dance'. This meaning of the √zff overlaps the use of the √zfn in Classical Arabic. This dictionary also refers to the expression بحر زَفْن, which means 'epithet of sea'. I do not in fact understand what Piamenta means by this definition, since in this entry زَفْن seems to be an adjective for بحر and not an epithet for 'sea'. It might denote a wavy sea here, as in this dialect the root seems to denote motion as well. This semantic meaning is also found in this dictionary in the Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic √zff 'to panic' or √zfg (< زَفَق) 'to overflow, trick, have fun, joke'; there is similarity in the sense of amusement, and the equivalence of two consonants indicates a genetic kinship between the roots or a duplication of √zff, which can be regarded as the basis of √zfn.¹⁵

The Jews of Yemen have generally a dance called *zaffa* (pl. *zaffāt*), which is called also "the procession dancing". This is the main dance of the wedding.¹⁶ Very interesting is the variety of dances of the Jews of Ḥabbān in East Yemen, in which we find a type called *zaffa*, which is a slow dance in a circle: two or three women begin with this dance, and gradually other women join them. They hold each other's hand or hug each other's shoulders. They have also a dance called *zafne*, which is the main interest of

¹⁴ Moshe Piamenta, *Dictionary of Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1990), part 1, p. 231. See also the meaning of √zff: *zuff/yizoff* 'to behave, act; to accompany; to open, unfold and honoring of a bride [ṣan'āl]' in Jeffrey Debbo, *Jemenitisches Wörterbuch (Arabisch-Deutsch-Englisch)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1987), p. 289, p. 291. See also the same meaning of √zff as 'escort of the bride' in Hamdi A. Qafisheh, *NTC's Yemeni Arabic-English Dictionary* (Lincolnwood (Chicago), Illinois: NTC, 1999), p. 278: *zaffah* - 1. Wedding ceremony. (2. Load, cargo زَفَّة مَاء). *Zifāf* - Wedding ceremony. *Zaffāfahī* - [pl. -āt] one who sings at a wedding and makes the bride dance.

¹⁵ Compare √zrf "to wet, to water" in Wolf Leslau, *Ethiopic and South Arabic Contribution to the Hebrew Lexicon* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1958), p. 19.

¹⁶ See Haim Sa'adon, (editor). *Teymān [=Yemen]*. (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 2002), p. 101.

this article. The *zafne* is a slow dance in pairs, while holding the bowl of henna. The rhythm of the dance is as follows: two steps right and left towards the inner part of the circle with a slight lifting of the hands and light bending of the knees.¹⁷

4.2. Maghrebian dialects

In the Maghrebian dialect, to which Maltese belongs, namely Modern Moroccan Arabic, we find also the use of زَفَان, but sometimes as زُفَان and sometimes as *zaffān*, with a short vowel and an *Imāla*. In Tetuan¹⁸ زُفَان means ‘the one who makes dancing’. This dictionary says that the etymology of \sqrt{zfn} is Arabic and means ‘to dance’ (رَقَصَ). However, in this dialect I found very interesting the use of the expression لَا يَنْسَى هَزَّ كَتَافِهِ literally ‘the dancer can die but he never forgets how to move his shoulders’; the idiomatic meaning denotes a man who waylays women in the street and clings to them. Note that this expression is also used to curse somebody. Interestingly, ‘the movement of the shoulders’ signifies a special way of dancing, which will be dealt with later. The Colin dictionary¹⁹ of dialectal Moroccan Arabic defines *zaffān*²⁰ as ‘saltimbanque, baladin rural, ambulant, qui chante et danse en agitant ses amples manches’. Here the *zaffān* is a rural clown who also moves in a very peculiar and agile way, which is what \sqrt{zfn} normally denotes as we have seen.

¹⁷ See Yael Shay, “Shirā u-maḥōl ba-ḥatunā be-ḳerev nešōt Ḥabbān” [=Wedding songs and dance among the women of Ḥabbān]. In *Tehuda*, 15, 1996, p. 56.

¹⁸ ‘Abd al-Mun‘im Sayyid ‘Abd al-‘Āl, *Mu‘ḡam šamāl al-Maḡrib: Tiṭwān wa mā-ḥawlahā* (Al-Qāhira: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabī li-ṭṭibā’a wa-nnašr, 1388 H.=1968), p.97.

¹⁹ Zakia Iraqui Sinaceur, *Le Dictionnaire Colin d’Arabe Dialectal Marocain* (Rabat: Editions Al Manahil – Ministère des Affaires Culturelles, 1994), v. 3, p. 722.

²⁰ In this dialect *zaffān* has the suffix -a for the plural: *zaffāna*. See also Richard S. Harrell, *A Dictionary of Moroccan Arabic (Arabic-English)* (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1966), p. 226.

5. \sqrt{zfn} in Semitic Languages

5.1. In North-West Semitic Languages

This Semitic subdivision evinces a metathesis of \sqrt{zff} . Biblical Hebrew, and later Modern Hebrew too, has the root פזז meaning ‘to dance’;²¹ to jump’. In Syriac as well there is ܦܕܐ ‘to dance’ and ܦܕܐܝܐ ‘one who moves swiftly and easily’.²² We can implement the metathesis in Classical Arabic too, hence ٤زز, which also means ‘to jump’ or ‘to do something with agile movements’,²³ a meaning semantically close to ‘dance’ [v.].

5.2. In South Semitic Languages

More solid and frequent evidence for \sqrt{zfn} is found in South Semitic Languages: on the Horn of Africa, and in Oman, on the southern rim of the Arabian Peninsula. \sqrt{zfn} exists in Ancient and Modern languages alike in this Semitic group.

5.2.1 Ethiopian languages

5.2.1.1. Ge'ez: \sqrt{zfn} as a verb denotes ‘to dance’ $yəzfan$ [ደገፈን] and it is also found in causative ‘ $azfana$ [አገፍኑ]; ‘dancer’ is called $zafāni$ [ፈኑ]; $zafan$ [ፈኑ] ‘dance, chant’; $məzfan$ [ገፈን] ‘place of dancing’.²⁴

²¹ Wilhelm Gesenius, *Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament* (Berlin, Göttingen, Heidelberg: Springer-Verlag, 1962), p. 638. For Aramaic words that derive from Ethiopic see also S. Fraenkel, *Die aramäischen Fremdwörter im Arabischen* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1886, rep. Hildesheim and New York: Georg Olms, 1982), p. 323. Compare also J. Payne Smith, *A Compendious Syriac Dictionary* (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1957), pp. 440–441 ‘to leap’ and $pzītā$ ‘agile, nimble’.

²² Wilhelm Gesenius, *Handwörterbuch über das Alte Testament*, p. 638.

²³ See for example Ibn Fāris, *Mu‘ğam Maqāyīs al-Luġa*, pp. 438–349.

²⁴ See Wolf Leslau, *Concise Dictionary of Geez (Classical Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1989), p. 184.

5.2.1.2. Amharic: \sqrt{zfn} is deeply rooted in this language. All the semantic meanings are related to dancing, sometimes to dancing accompanied by singing, moving the body or clapping hands.²⁵ *zäffänä* [ረፍኔ] means 'to sing, to dance and sing [simultaneously], move the head in time to rhythm, to clap the hands in time to the music; to tremble, shake, e.g. hands'. The use of the verb *zäffänä* [ረፍኔ] reminds us of the geminated root \sqrt{zff} which is also found in Arabic; in Amharic it means 'to sing several times'; 'to hum, sing in a low voice'. \sqrt{zfn} is also attested in the passive voice, e.g. *tä-zäffäna* [ተረፍኑ] 'to be sung or danced'; 'to be clapped (hands in time with the music)' and also, in a more accurate semantic denotation, 'to leap during dancing'; \sqrt{zfn} is used also in causative, *azäffäna* [አረፍኑ] 'to cause to shake or tremble' and *azzäffäna* [አረፍኑ] 'to have s.o. dance or sing, have s.o. leap or compose poetry'; 'to have a song sung (inf.)' or *azzäffäna* [ተረፍኑ] 'to help to sing or dance, help to clap in time to the music'; 'to dance together, e.g. two clowns²⁶ doing matching dances'; 'to accompany someone in singing'. As a noun, *zäfän* [ረፍኔ] (and also *zäfäna* [ረፍኔ]) 'act of dancing' or 'dancing') has the following various meanings: 'melody, song, dance'; 'moving the head or body in time to music, clapping in time to music'; 'doing the *askästa*-shoulder shrugging to music'.²⁷ The last addition in this entry regarding the *askästa*-shoulder dance is innovative. It may contribute to the ultimate comprehension of the etymon of \sqrt{zfn} since it emphasizes the rapid movement that we saw in other languages, especially Arabic, but it is also important regarding the particularity of this Ethiopian dance. Semantically, *zäfän* nowadays is understood to denote a traditional sort of Ethiopian dance, whereas the verb for modern Western dances is *dännäsä* and a modern dancer is accordingly called *dännäs*.²⁸

²⁵ Thomas Leiper Kane, *Amharic-English Dictionary* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1990), p. 1684.

²⁶ Compare Sinaceur, p. 722.

²⁷ \sqrt{zfn} can be phonetically shifted in Semitic Languages to other verbs such as *صَفَن*, or even *ظَفَر*. In the Triangle area of Israel the Arabic dialects use the verb *صَفَى* in the sense of 'to collect sand rapidly'. See also Augusti Dillman, *Lexicon Linguae Aethiopiae cum indice Latino* (Osnabrück: Biblio Verlag, 1970), 1070.

²⁸ Wolf Leslau, *Concise Amharic Dictionary* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), p. 312.

5.2.1.3. Tigrē: In this language \sqrt{zfn} means ‘to dance’, but it has a more delicate meaning of ‘to perform the dance of the dead’ with a gender element, namely ‘dance performed by women’.²⁹

5.2.1.4. Moča, Harari and Gurage: \sqrt{zfn} is not attested in these Ethiopic languages³⁰.

5.2.2. Languages of the southern rim of the Arabian Peninsula

5.2.2.1. Sabaic: \sqrt{zfn} is not found; the meaning of \sqrt{zff} is not clear as it may denote ‘outflow channel of a dam’.³¹

5.2.2.2. In Modern South Arabian languages Mehri³², Gibbali and Soqotri³³ there is documentation of \sqrt{zfn} . In Mehri \sqrt{zfn} is used only to denote a dance performed by men, in contrast to Tigrē, where, as noted above, the verb is assigned to women, e.g. ‘do dance’: $zfu:n/izú:fēn$ (man) whereas $naḥyó:t/tinó:ḥej$ (woman). Gibbali shows the same differentiation between dancing men and

²⁹ Compare to the verb $zānfāfa$, which means ‘drink very much’, perhaps from an original meaning ‘do something in abundance; be in abundance’. Semantically, the abundance can be related to swift or agile [movements]; see Wolf Leslau, *North Ethiopic and Amharic Cognates in Tigre* (Napoli: Instituto Orientali Napoli, 1982), p. 86. Maria Höfner, *Wörterbuch der Tigrē-Deutsch-Englisch* (Wiesbaden: Steiner Verlag GmbH, 1956), p. 506: \sqrt{zfn} ‘den Totentanz aufführen (Frauen), tanzen’; whereas $ṣnṣ$ means ‘Tanzenplatz’.

³⁰ Wolf Leslau, *Etymological Dictionary of Gurage (Ethiopic)* (Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1979), p. 166-167. Compare also Wolf Leslau, *A Dictionary of Moča (Southwestern Ethiopia)* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1959), p. 63 and the verb ‘to dance’ in Harari in Wolf Leslau, *Etymological Dictionary of Harari* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), p. 198.

³¹ Compare \sqrt{zff} in A. F. L. Beeston, M. A. Ghul, W. W. Müller, *Sabaic Dictionary (English-French-Arabic)* (Louvain-la-Neuve: Peeters 1982), p. 170. See also Joan Copeland Biella, *Dictionary of Old South Arabic: Sabeian Dialect* (Chico, CA: Harvard Semitic Studies no. 25, 1982), 160-161.

³² Aki'o Nakano, *Comprehensive Vocabulary of Southern Arabic. Mahri, Gibbali and Soqotri* (Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (Studia Culturae Islamicae 29), 1986), 71.

³³ See Wolf Leslau, *Lexique Soqotri (Sudarabique Moderne) avec comparaisons et explications etymologiques* (Paris: Librairie C. Klincksieck, 1938), 155.

dancing women as in Mehri: *alé:q Muḥ.³⁴ ḏ-iú:fēn!* ‘Look M. is dancing!’ and *alé:q ‘Am’ína tinó:ḥej!* ‘Look, Amina is dancing!’.³⁵ Note that in Soqotri \sqrt{zfn} has a different meaning, ‘to join’, whereas the root that marks ‘to dance’ is \sqrt{rgd} .³⁶

6. Conclusion and assumption

The root \sqrt{zfn} is nowadays alive and vividly in use in three different geographical locations: in some Ethiopian languages on the Horn of Africa, especially Amharic, with several expressions and idioms; on the southern fringes of the Arabian Peninsula in Modern South Arabian Languages, where it is used formally to denote ‘to dance’ and also to denote only ‘men dancing’; and in Maltese, the focus of this article, where \sqrt{zfn} has even several meanings, expressions and idioms that derive from the basic meaning ‘to dance’.

There is evidence that in the past \sqrt{zfn} was also used in Andalusian Arabic, which is now extinct. Some use of \sqrt{zfn} is found in Post-Classical Yemeni Arabic, in some Modern Yemeni dialects, and rarely in some Modern Moroccan dialects. Classical Arabic regards this root as alien and probably of foreign etymology: it is said that زَفْنٌ ‘resembles a dance’ with emphasis on the word شبيه [resembles], namely it does not denote the dances that the Arabs were used to in the time of the Prophet.

In the Hadith tradition of ‘Ā’isha another layer is solved, as she attests that she saw a delegation of Abyssinians who ‘perform \sqrt{zfn} ’. Classical Arabic poetry assists us here also in two different ways: first, the \sqrt{zfn} denotes a dance of black maids and is also related to the Abyssinians and their king; secondly, the scarcity of the use of the root in this genre strengthens the probability of a foreign etymon penetrating the southern rim of the Arabian Pe-

³⁴ Here as an abbreviation of the name Muhammad.

³⁵ Gibbali also has the verb *rkéḏ/irákod* which recalls the Biblical and also Modern Hebrew רקד [compare Arabic رقص] ‘to dance’.

³⁶ This root with a slight phonetic change is found also in Soqotri, *ré:ged* (pl. *tró:gid*), e.g. *férhem u-embó:riye ré:ged ka-tahidē:then* ‘the girls and the boys dance together’.

ninsula from Abyssinia. This explains the existence of the root in Post-Classical Yemeni dialects and its survival in Modern South Arabian Languages such as Mehri and Soqotri since they are remote yet reflect a very ancient use of vocabulary. In Biblical (and later also in Modern) Hebrew the root is changed by metathesis to $\sqrt{p[f]zz}$ and also to $\sqrt{p[f]zm}$. There is also an etymological-semantic relation between the meaning of \sqrt{zff} and \sqrt{zfn} , e.g. in Arabic, denoting the instrumental-musical atmosphere of a wedding.³⁷

We saw that \sqrt{zfn} means basically 'to dance'. However, the sense of the verb and other morphologically and phonetically related verbs in Arabic and other Semitic languages sharpens the semantic meaning of rapid movements which are characteristic of this dance, and the shoulder shrugging, which is so typical of the Ethiopian *askasta*-dance to music.³⁸

All the data show us that \sqrt{zfn} originated in Abyssinia, from where it made its way to the Yemen in the southern parts of the Arabian Peninsula, and later also to the Mekka region at the start of Islam. The absence of actual use of \sqrt{zfn} in other Semitic languages, such as North-Western Semitic and East Semitic Languages, seems to support the assumption that \sqrt{zfn} is South Semitic in origin. Thus a lacuna is created, as we find \sqrt{zfn} again in Andalusia, Malta and Morocco. The root might have penetrated Andalusian Arabic by means of conquerors of Yemeni or even Abyssinian descent.³⁹

³⁷ See e.g. in Yemeni Arabic Dialects, *al-Mu'jam al-Yamani fi lluġa wa-tTurāt* (Dimašq: al-Maṭba'a al-'Ālamiyya, 1996), 393.

³⁸ For other dance names in Africa see Esther A. Dagan, *The Spirit's Dance in Africa: Evolution, Transformation and Continuity* (Canada, QC, Westmount: Galerie Amrad African Arts Publications, 1997), pp. 191-195. The *askasta*-dance in Ethiopia is not mentioned there.

³⁹ This strengthens the words of Martin R. Zammit in "Andalusi Arabic and Maltese: A preliminary Survey" in: *Folia Orientalia*, vol. 45-46 (2009-2010), p. 24: "This comes as no surprise since the Yemenite component constituted the majority of the early Muslim settlement in Andalus". Zammit adds a glossary of Yemenite cognates in Andalus and Maltese Arabic; he continues saying: "Moreover, South Arabian culture has made itself felt in a number of loanwords which found their way to Old Arabic e.g. *šini* (Pl. *šawānī*) M <*xini*> 'galley'".

This assumption is emphasized in Malta by three levels of historical justifications. Charles Dalli in his book⁴⁰ on the Islamic period of Malta, tells us about the conquest of the island (869 or 870 AD) by the Moslem fleet commander Aḥmad Ibn ‘Umar Ibn ‘Abdalla, who was nicknamed *Ḥabašī* (*The Abyssinian*). This commander’s name is immortalized in Qaṣr Ḥabašī at Sousse (Tunisia), where an inscription recording his achievement is noted by Ibn al-Ğazzār. This circumstance highlights the Abyssinian influence of the Moslem commanders and soldiers on Malta from the very start in Dār al-Islām. The second reinforcement of Yemenite influence on Malta is personified in the Moslem historian of Malta, al-Ḥimyarī. His name itself betrays his Yemenite-Himyarite origins. He also lived in Andalus and Ceuta, and wrote his geographical dictionary *Kitāb ar-Rawḍ al-Mi‘tār fī Khabar al-‘Aqtār* (*‘The perfumed Garden in the News of Countries’*). al-Ḥimyarī, as quoted in Dalli’s book, had an eye for detail and excellence in pen, and was a master of the Arabic language.

The third factor that possibly put down Abyssinian roots in Malta is the mystery of Malta’s *‘Abīd* (‘slaves’). al-Ḥimyarī relates the story of an attack on Malta by Byzantine ships that blockaded the Moslems on the island, almost forcing them to surrender. The Moslems asked for *amān*, or ‘safeconduct’, but it was refused except for women and possessions. The word used is *amwāl*, which possibly denotes the possession of slaves. The Moslems and their slave-soldiers joined forces, and early on the second day ‘they asked for the help of Allāh the Almighty and they marched and stormed around ‘the Byzantines’’. This historical episode reveals some interesting information about the composition of the local community of Moslems on Malta. Evidently, this slave population was distinct on both social and religious grounds from the *Aḥrār* (literally ‘free people’) social layer. Dalli writes that the origins of these *‘Abīd* are unclear, as is their religious affiliation. He rhetorically asks, ‘was Malta their place of captivity, or their place of origin? It is equally possible that they were brought to undertake the colonization of the island and the cultivation of rural estates.’

⁴⁰ Charles Dalli, *Malta: the Medieval Millennium*. (Malta: Midsea Books Ltd., 2006), pp. 51-73.

Dalli anchors the use of the Maltese-Andalusian Arabic word *raḥal* ['village'] to this context, since it is plausible that the first *raḥal* was established in Malta at this time.⁴¹ Yet it is no wonder that we find *√zfn* also in contemporary Arabic, in some Moroccan dialects, and in the extinct dialects of Andalusian Arabic.

We witnessed the connection of the numerous references of Abyssinians from Classical Arabic dictionaries throughout Classical Arabic Poetry and the historical facts on Malta during the Moslem time. Hence we suggest that *√zfn* is an Abyssinian word etymologically, which penetrated Yemen and Oman. With the Arab conquests of North Africa, Andalusia and Malta it entered these regions, especially by means of army officers and soldiers, and even some slaves, of Yemeni or Abyssinian ancestry. Consequently the absence of *√zfn* from a vast area from Yemen to North Africa, Andalusia and Malta is readily understandable. This linguistic factor strengthens the likelihood of a social layer of Moslems connecting Malta and Sicily⁴² – a matter already proven, strengthening the existence of a certain social linguistic Yemeni⁴³

⁴¹ The word *raḥal* denotes at that period a private estate of around 50 hectares belonging to a socially or publically distinguished personality. A number of places called *raḥal* are found not only numerous in Malta, but also in Sicily and the word is also documented in Andalusian Arabic. Thus, the Arabic of Malta which in the course of time became an independent language, at least in the eyes of its modern inhabitants, is undoubtedly related to North African and to Andalusian Arabic dialects. See Charles Dalli, *Malta: the Medieval Millennium*, 65, and Kaptan Pawlu Bugeja, *Kelmet il-Malti*. Floriana (Malta: ANG (Associated News Group Ltd.), 1999), 200. This word in contemporary Maltese is shortened to *ḥal* and the *l* in this word, which is interpreted as a part of the determination, is shifted according to the Maltese 'Sun Letters' laws, e.g. *Ḥaž-Żebbuġ* ['the village of olives'].

⁴² On Arabic in Sicily see Diunius A. Agius, *Siculo Arabic* (London and New York: Kegan Paul International, 1996.) I did not find *√zfn* in Ibn Makkī Aṣ-Ṣiqillī, *Tatqīf al-Lisān wa Talqīh al-Ġinān*. (Al-Qāhira: al-Maḡlis al-'A'lā li-š-šū'un al-'Islamiyya, 1966). Still, I suppose that this root existed in Siculo Arabic because of the geographic proximity and shared historical background with Maltese and Malta. About the relations between Maltese and Magrebin Arabic dialects and Siculo Arabic see in Albert Borg, *Maltese*. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2005), xiii.

⁴³ Alexander Borg arrives to the same conclusions in his article "Between Typology and Diachrony: Some Formal Parallels in Hebrew and Maltese" in

and as well as Abyssinian layer as characteristic in those places; we know that in Andalusia, for example, the Arabic dialects preserved their characteristics as in their original countries, such as Yemen.

This article emphasizes the role of the Yemeni and Abyssinian social layer of Malta during the Moslem period, but it also calls for further etymological research into these origins in the vocabulary of Maltese. Such research can shed light on the derivation of a specific word, but also on some unsolved mysteries of history.

Zaphenath-Paneah: Linguistic Studies Presented to Elisha Qimron on the Occasion of His Sixty-Fifth Birthday. (Beer-Sheva and Jerusalem: Ben Gurion University and Bialik, 2009, pp. 28, 31, 34, 38, 40, 45), see e.g. p. 28, the Yemenite origin of the word *gharqub* “heel”.

A Semitic Etymology for Greek αἷμα

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Résumé. Le terme grec courant pour « sang », αἷμα, n'a pas d'étymologie reconnue ; les dictionnaires étymologiques de la langue grecque les plus récents rejettent les diverses suggestions — peu convaincantes — qui ont été avancées. Selon moi, une expression nord-ouest sémitique désignant la « vie » en son essence pourrait être à l'origine du nom grec αἷμα. Le verbe « vivre » (employé uniquement pour des créatures ayant du sang) dans une forme nominale plurielle, HYM, que l'on rencontre en araméen, en hébreu et en phénico-punique, expliquerait le champ sémantique et le vocalisme du grec αἷμα.

The usual Greek word for “blood,” αἷμα, has no established etymology, and the most recent etymological dictionaries of Greek by Chantraine and Beekes reject the suggestions that have been raised.¹ Those suggestions vary widely, and are indeed unconvincing. For example, it has been suggested that the root is the proto-Indo-European “sei,” meaning, “to drip,”² which does not explain the vocalism,³ and seems unlikely as a source, since the dripping of blood is neither a primary nor a distinctive aspect of the human experience of blood. Another proposal is that αἷμα is a verbal noun derived from the verb ἵημι, meaning, “to throw, cast”, i.e. is a weaker grade of the word ῥῆμα, itself meaning “projectile.”⁴ Even if the vocalism is possible here, the semantics seem unlikely, given that spurting is, like dripping, hardly central or

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¹ Chantraine (2009) 32–33; and Beekes (2010) 38–39.

² Hofmann (1950) 7.

³ As pointed out by Beekes (2010) 38–39; and note that Pokorny (1959) 877 does not list αἷμα among the derivatives of “sāi-”.

⁴ Koller (1967) 154, who claims: “Das Verhältnis von ῥῆμα zu αἷμα ist also wie das von τρώμα bzw. τρῶμα zu τραῦμα oder von θώμα zu θαῦμα.”

fundamental to the human experience of blood. Even less likely – although one is always hesitant to say “impossible” about etymologies – is the claim that explains αἷμα as a kind of emphatic form of the Indo-European root “ma” for mother.⁵

There appears to be no plausible Indo-European explanation for αἷμα. The expected word for “blood” in Greek would be ἔαρ (like the Hittite *ešhar* or Sanskrit *ásrk*),⁶ which is attested only in Hellenistic poetry. (Germanic “Blut” is connected with bloom; whereas Latin *cruor* / Greek κρέας refers to spilled blood, as from a “raw” wound.⁷) It seems reasonable to look elsewhere for an etymology.

On many grounds, an import from southwest Asia seems possible. There are numerous names in Greek for imports from southwest Asia, that lack any plausible Indo-European etymology, and that have plausible southwest Asian etymologies.⁸ The transmitted terms are diverse, and include paraphernalia of trade, such as: the κάδος / jar; the μνᾶ / unit of weight; and the σάκκος / sack. Likewise, there are items of trade, especially: ἑλέφας / ivory; κύανος / blue-glass; κύμινον / cumin; σήσαμον / sesame; φῦκος / sea-weed-dye; and χρυσός / gold. Even rather ordinary and pervasive objects have West Asiatic names, such as the χιτῶν. Many of these were transmitted already in the Mycenaean period, others are only attested later. Most words transmitted into Greek from southwest Asia seem to be Northwest-Semitic, although Hittite and other languages play a role. There are also many connections between Greek and Northwest-Semitic religious practice,⁹ especially the terms for incenses used in temples, such as: κρόκος / saffron; λίβανος / frankincense; and μύρρα / myrrh; as well as the cultic terms καθαρός / clean or pure; μῶμος / blame or blemish; νέκταρ / divine food; πελανός / sacred cake (of meal, honey, and oil); and σφάζω / slaughter; and perhaps νέκταρ / divine food

⁵ Dart (1968) 24.

⁶ Chantraine (2009) 293–294; and Beekes (2010) 366.

⁷ Chantraine (2009) 557–558; and Beekes (2010) 774.

⁸ Masson (1967) s.vv.; Brown (1995) 204–209 χιτῶν; Brown (2000) 287–293, 297–305; Chantraine (2009) s.vv.; and Beekes (2010) s.vv.

⁹ Brown (1995) 183–216.

belongs on the list.¹⁰ None of those words has a convincing Indo-European etymology, but all of them have a plausible Northwest-Semitic one (one reverse case is the altar itself, where Greek βωμός seems to explain Northwest-Semitic *bāmāh*).¹¹

Many early Greek uses of αἷμα employ the word as a kind of synecdoche for “life,” a figure that has become pervasive in western culture, but is nonetheless peculiar. Because that peculiarity will provide a hint, it is worth briefly summarizing the evidence. Many Greek texts that speak of “lifeblood” refer to the drinking of blood. Teiresias, e.g., explains to Odysseus that ghosts who drink blood regain for a while a greater semblance of life, saying, “let me drink the blood and I shall speak the truth” (*Odyssey* 11.96), and then promises that the dead who drink will speak, and will speak truly (11.147–148). In the *Oresteia* trilogy of Aeschylus, it is the Furies who gain strength by drinking human blood, and demand “a third drink of undiluted blood” (*Libation Bearers* 578). In Sophocles, it is Electra who is accused by Clytemnestra of “forever drinking up the undiluted blood of my life” (*Electra* 785–786). A close parallel to this “lifeblood” figure outside early Greek is the Hebrew etiology in *Genesis* 9.4 for the prohibition against eating “meat in the blood of its life”, and more explicitly, *Leviticus* 17.11/14 (“for the life of all flesh is its blood”) and *Deuteronomy* 12.23 (“the blood is its life”). However, parallels to this figure outside Greek are rare, and besides Hittite,¹² only Northwest-Semitic languages provide any (below).

The evidence for the transmission of Northwest-Semitic words into Greek, and the evidence that αἷμα was a kind of synecdoche for “life” in early Greek, may be combined to suggest that a Northwest-Semitic etymology could explain the evidence about αἷμα. That is, the Greek name for blood, and the synecdoche that it bears, would be another piece of imported Northwest-Semitic

¹⁰ Levin (1971); West (1997) 39.

¹¹ Levin (1971) νέκταρ; Burkert (1975) 77 καθαρός; Brown (1995) 199–201 σφάζω, 201–204 βωμός, 210–213 λίβανος, 232 μῶμος; West (1997) 39 νέκταρ and πελανός, 40 λίβανος and μύρρα, 40–41 βωμός and σφάζω; Brown (2000) 302 μῶμος; and Chantraine (2009) 585–586 κρόκος.

¹² Puhvel (1984) 305–313, s.v. “eshar, ishar” (blood), see 306.11–29, “life-blood.”

cultural material. The ancient Northwest-Semitic verb “to live” is used only of creatures with blood; in the plural of a nominal form, found in Aramaic, Hebrew, Phoenician, and Punic, it refers to life in its essence, or to long life.¹³ The word is *HYM* (חַיִּים), which would exactly explain Greek αἶμα. I propose that this usage is the etymology for Greek αἶμα.

Any speaker of a Northwest-Semitic language would presumably have perceived immediately that the *-im* (ים) ending is simply the masculine-plural ending (cf. cherub-im and seraph-im, e.g.), and not part of the lexical root. However, native speakers treated as semantically singular some Northwest-Semitic words formally in the plural (*tantum plurale*), such as *hayyim* itself, *mayim* (“water”), *panim* (“face”), *shamayim* (“heaven”), and especially *elohim* (“the divinity”). Moreover, a non-native speaker, hearing the word *HYM* used and having its usage explained, would not likely understand, much less attempt to reproduce, the collective plurality.

Not only Semitic, but also Indo-European languages display the *tantum plurale*. Such words in English include: “the blues” (musical genre), “bowels,” “(to have) brains,” and “(to have) guts,” “clothes,” (eye) “glasses,” “headquarters,” and “hindquarters,” “mathematics,” “metaphysics,” and “physics,” “politics.”

Such words in French include: “bagages” (luggage), “combles” (attic), “décombres” (rubble), “dégâts” (damage), “échecs” (chess), “noces” (wedding), “obsèques” (funeral), “pâtes” (pasta), “règles” (menstrual period), “ténèbres” (darkness), “vacances” (vacation). Such words in German include: “Eingeweide” (entrails), “Eltern” (parents), “Ferien” (vacation), “Gebrüder” (brethren), “Gezeiten” (tide), “Kosten” (expense), “Leute” (people), “Trümmer” (debris), “Wirren” (confused motion). Such words in

¹³ See: Kohler and Baumgartner, vol. 1 (1994) 308, s.v. “חַיִּי” I.B, and 309, s.v. “חַיִּי” III (member of a tribe or family); Hoftijzer and Jongeling, vol. 2 (1995) 365–367, s.v. “חַיִּי” (b), the plural is cited “*passim*,” Kohler and Baumgartner, vol. 5 (2000) 1874, s.v. “חַיִּי”, *tantum pl.* (Aramaic same as Hebrew); Krahmalkov (2000) 181–183, s.v. “חַיִּי,” and Halayqa (2008) 166–167, s.v. “חַיִּי (II)”: “life,” with abs. pl. “חַיִּי”.

Latin include:¹⁴ *castra* (n. pl., camp), *cunae* (f. pl., cradle), *diuitiae* (f. pl., wealth), *fasti* (m. pl., calendar), *insidiae* (f. pl., ambush), *moenia* (n. pl., city wall), *nuptiae* (f. pl., wedding), *spolia* (n. pl., booty), *tenebrae* (f. pl., darkness), *tricae* (f. pl., nonsense), *viscera* (n. pl., entrails). Finally, from Greek we may cite these:¹⁵ ἀνατολαί (f. pl., east, sunrise), and δυσμαί (f. pl., west, sunset), ἔναρα (n. pl., booty), ἔντεα and τεύχεα (n. pl., gear, tackle), κριθαί (f. pl., barley), λέκτρα (n. pl., marriage-bed), παιδικά (n. pl., darling boy), πραπίδες and φρένες (f. pl., midriff, mind), πύλαι (f. pl., city-gate), χρήματα (n. pl., money).

The transformation of the initial phoneme *H* into an aspirate is well within the range of Greek transformations of Semitic consonants; and in the Athenian alphabet in use before 403 BCE, the letter “H” (*eta*, derived from the Semitic letter “*het*”, i.e., *H* / *h*) stood for the aspirate.¹⁶ A parallel to a Semitic initial *het* becoming an initial aspirate in Greek (as with αἶμα) may be seen in ἄρπη from קֶרֶב (“sickle”).¹⁷

Moreover, the reception into Greek of *hayyim* as a neuter-singular is consistent with a number of Greek words for body-parts or body-contents. Compare these dozen body-part names (many of which have some cultic or psychic significance): βρέγμα / front of the head; διάφραγμα / diaphragm; ἥπαρ / liver; ισχίον / hip joint; κῆρ / heart; μέλος / limb; ὄμμα / eye; οὖς / ear; πρόσωπον / face; σκέλος / leg; στήθος / chest; and στόμα / mouth. For bodily fluids with neuter names, compare: οὖρον / urine; πνεῦμα / breath; σίελον / spittle; and φλέγμα / inflam-

¹⁴ Gildersleeve and Lodge (1894 / 1895) §69.B (pp. 35–36) provide a long list; see also Hale and Buck (1903) §104 (p. 51); and Kühner and Stegmann (1955) §23 (pp. 85–86).

¹⁵ Kühner and Blass (1890) §141 “Defectiva” (pp. 519–521); Schwyzler (1950) § B.I.3.e.β (pp. 51–52). Note that none of the Greek, and few (ca 10 %) of the Latin, instances are masculine: if not an accident, that might have prevented Greek speakers from perceiving the m. pl. *HYM* (יִימ) as a *tantum plurale*.

¹⁶ Jeffery (1961 / 1990) 28.

¹⁷ Grimme (1925) 17; Burkert (1992) 85–87; Brown, vol. 1 (1995) 78–82; West (1997) 291; Brown, vol. 2 (2000) 303; and Beekes (2010) 138–139, stating that he is “inclined to assume a non-IE word”. Contrast Chantaine (2009) 114, assuming an Indo-European origin.

mation, pus, phlegm. The six parallels in -μα may explain the declension of the transmitted αἶμ- on the basis of a stem in -μα.

The proposed etymology fits what we know about the transmission of concepts and words from southwest Asia to Greece in the archaic period. This kind of borrowing has been explained as a “loan-translation,” in which what is transmitted is not simply lexical, but is instead an expression embodying an idea.¹⁸ In the case of Greek αἶμα from Northwest-Semitic ḤYM (חַיִּים), the figure has enjoyed a long life indeed.

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« Biblica et Semitica » : L'œuvre scientifique de Francesco Vattioni

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Abstract. *The 20th anniversary of the death of Francesco Vattioni (1922-1995) offered to Friends and Colleagues of the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart and of the University of Naples "L'Orientale" the occasion for revisiting the scientific work of the Italian Orientalist, internationally renowned.*

Vingt ans après la mort de Francesco Vattioni, un des orientalistes italiens les plus éminents du xx^e siècle, le siège de Brescia de l'Université Catholique a souhaité saluer sa figure et son activité de recherche multiforme, qui allait de la Bible hébraïque aux inscriptions judaïques et sémitiques, avec un intérêt particulier pour les langues, les cultures et les religions du Proche-Orient ancien. Les années qui nous séparent désormais de son départ assurent une substantielle objectivité dans la revisitation de son œuvre scientifique. Le congrès qui s'est tenu à Brescia, la ville d'origine de Vattioni, a mis en évidence sa contribution originale à la sémitistique, issue d'une part de sa passion envers la civilisation d'Hatra et sa langue –un dialecte araméen–, mais aussi de son application à l'étude de l'Afrique romaine et de l'épigraphie phénico-punique. Cette réunion a également été l'occasion de présenter un petit volume (*L'opera di Francesco Vattioni : 1922-1995*, a cura di Giancarlo Toloni, Brescia, Paideia Editrice, 2016), réalisé sous l'égide du Département de Sciences historiques et philologiques et de la Bibliothèque d'études historico-philologiques sur la Bible « Felice Montagnini » de l'Université Catholique avec la collaboration d'amis et de collègues de l'Université « L'Orientale » de Naples, qui partagèrent avec Vattioni de longues années d'études et de recherches. Ayant eu l'honneur de m'occuper de

l'édition de l'ouvrage, je présente en introduction la physionomie et les finalités de l'initiative, mémorial du travail de recherche d'« un illustre chercheur brescian » de notoriété internationale, selon les mots de Mario Taccolini dans son hommage institutionnel.

1. Aramaïsant

Riccardo Contini précise, en évoquant « Francesco Vattioni aramaïsant », que ce dernier ne s'est jamais penché sur les langues littéraires araméennes tardo-antiques et médiévales, ni sur les dialectes néo-araméens. Suivant ses intérêts épigraphiques, papyrologiques et antiquaires, il a accordé la priorité aux problèmes de sémantique et d'onomastique sur les questions de phonologie ou de morphologie. Son effort a consisté à recueillir systématiquement, en complément des textes littéraires et documentaires, tous les témoignages les plus anciens de la langue : légendes de sceaux, inscriptions sur ivoire et métal ou sur tablettes d'argile, attestations d'anthroponymes et de toponymes, gloses sur expressions et noms araméens dans les traditions gréco-latine et akkadienne. De ces recherches naquirent des collections et des répertoires de documentation, dont certains restent encore inégalés de nos jours, sur le nabatéen et le palmyrénien, sur le syriaque des inscriptions d'Édesse et du royaume d'Osroène et sur la langue d'Hatra.

C'est dans les phases de l'araméen ancien et impérial que la très vaste érudition antique et bibliographique de Vattioni brille avec plus de force. Contini signale notamment les compilations des textes araméens sur sceaux, pièces et ivoires qui, selon lui, fournissent un matériel indispensable aux ouvrages organiques sur l'histoire linguistique de l'araméen dans le 1^{er} millénaire av. J.-C. Des essais importants sont consacrés à l'étude des différents textes : des inscriptions lapidaires de la Syrie des IX^e-VIII^e siècles av. J.-C. aux documents sur papyrus de provenance égyptienne, sur lesquels il fait un commentaire inspiré par sa profonde connaissance de la lexicologie sémitique du nord-ouest.

Quant à l'araméen moyen, l'activité principale de Vattioni a été la constitution du *corpus* des inscriptions en syriaque ancien d'Odessa et d'Osroène, en intégrant également la traduction des épigraphes et en fournissant des données comparatives absentes de la célèbre monographie de Han Drijvers. Si Vattioni ne consacre au palmyrénien que l'édition des bustes funéraires de la collection Federico Zeri, il réserve à la civilisation nabatéenne et son épigraphie deux vastes essais et des notes détaillées. Le premier porte sur différents aspects du sacrifice chez les Nabatéens ; le deuxième rassemble, quant à lui, des notes hétérogènes avec des données provenant principalement de sources gréco-latines, et des annotations historico-religieuses et anthropologiques comprenant notamment la collecte de données épigraphiques et onomastiques sur la culture et la religion de cette civilisation, ce qui représentera par la suite un matériel précieux pour la réalisation d'ouvrages systématiques par d'autres auteurs.

L'hatréen reste cependant la variété araméenne pour laquelle Vattioni éprouve le plus vif intérêt. Pour preuve, notamment, la monographie (1981) qu'il consacre au *corpus* des 341 inscriptions les plus connues d'Hatra et dans laquelle sont recueillis pour la première fois dans un volume unique les textes publiés en arabe par Fu'ad Safar entre 1951 et 1971, puis réédités par A. Caquot et R. Degen. Vattioni inclut en appendice une liste des épigraphes latines retrouvées à Hatra, et un index lexical qui annonce le schéma de l'imposant *Inventaire* de B. Aggoula (1991), avec des annotations sur l'histoire politico-religieuse de la ville. La deuxième monographie (1996), de publication posthume, intègre au catalogue des inscriptions les centaines de pièces postérieures à 1981. L'objectif premier de Vattioni était le rassemblement des textes, auquel il subordonnait des questions de caractère historico-politique, culturel et religieux, sans toutefois tenter une synthèse organique. L'apport le plus significatif de Vattioni aux études hatréennes est d'avoir mis en place le premier *corpus* épigraphique intégral, qui est resté une référence même après la publication du répertoire d'Aggoula (notoirement vicié de nombreuses fautes), jusqu'à la parution de la monographie de Beyer (1998) comprenant les textes, la grammaire, le glossaire et les indices onomastiques, et qui toutefois, toujours d'après Contini,

présente certaines interprétations non partagées par Vattioni, rendant encore significatif le recours à l'œuvre de ce dernier.

2. Épigraphiste de phénico-punique

« Francesco Vattioni et les études phénico-puniques » est le sujet traité par Giovanni Garbini. Après un aperçu bien documenté sur la situation des études sémitiques en Italie dans la deuxième moitié du ^{xx}^e siècle, Garbini concentre son attention sur deux secteurs d'étude, complémentaires et généralement séparés, qui ont été unis pendant une courte période dans l'Institut Biblique Pontifical de Rome, où une faculté d'études orientalistes a aussi été créée afin d'adapter l'exégèse de la Bible aux nouvelles exigences dérivées du développement des connaissances sur le Proche-Orient ancien. De fait, Vattioni fut étudiant de l'Institut Biblique de 1946 à 1952, mais termina sa formation en suivant les cours de la faculté orientale. C'est pourquoi, notamment, la recherche de Vattioni fut marquée, dès ses premières publications, par la contextualisation de l'étude biblique dans le cadre des cultures voisines. Ses principaux intérêts linguistiques étaient dirigés vers le phénicien et les dialectes araméens, des langues épigraphiques peu connues sur le plan morphologique et lexical qui lui donnèrent la possibilité de mettre en évidence son goût naturel pour le document inédit ou mal interprété, et donc source de nouvelles recherches et de nouvelles données linguistiques.

La production de Vattioni dans le secteur du phénico-punique occupe un rôle de premier plan dans sa bibliographie. Ces recherches se concentrent principalement sur l'onomastique et l'anthroponymie, des domaines vers lesquels son intérêt avait commencé à se diriger dès sa première collection de sceaux hébraïques (1969). De chaque nom, il enregistrerait des parallélismes et des formes affines dans d'autres secteurs linguistiques. La recherche des anthroponymes devint ainsi une passion, exercée avec un travail infatigable et une érudition immense. Conscient de la pauvreté du lexique phénicien des inscriptions, il s'efforça de l'élargir en cherchant des traces de noms dans la documentation épigraphique gréco-latine et dans la littérature phénicienne.

Le premier travail sur le phénicien, un des meilleurs selon Garbini, eut pour objet la publication de l'inscription bilingue découverte à Pyrgi, un texte linéaire dans sa structure phénicienne, mais particulièrement difficile car il reflétait une situation culturelle étrusco-romaine pratiquement incompréhensible. La deuxième étude, parue en 1976, était consacrée aux sections puniques du *Poenulus* de Plaute ; outre un bref commentaire et une énumération de plusieurs interprétations célèbres, elle contenait la liste de noms d'herbes et de noms latins basés sur les écrits de saint Augustin. Vattioni présentait aussi le *corpus* des quelques épigraphes puniques écrites en caractères grecs et latino-puniques de la Tripolitaine. Son troisième et considérable travail est le *corpus* des sceaux phénico-puniques, constitué sur la base de sceaux hébraïques, est le plus riche connu.

Outre l'anthroponymie, l'onomastique – en particulier punique d'Afrique du Nord – est son domaine de recherche de prédilection. En 1979, il écrit deux articles importants et de grande consistance proposant une longue liste de noms. Le deuxième, qui ajoutait à 273 noms un commentaire avec leurs variantes graphiques attestées par les inscriptions, constitue, pour Garbini, la contribution la plus significative de Vattioni à la connaissance de l'anthroponymie nord-africaine car elle montre l'évolution en époque romaine de la prononciation des noms d'origine phénicienne. L'intérêt de Vattioni pour le phénico-punique diminue entre 1983 et 1988, pour renaître en 1989 avec une série de notes rassemblées sous le titre *Varia Semitica* et avec l'étude de quelques inscriptions néo-puniques.

3. Hébraïsant

Giancarlo Lacerenza, après avoir consacré la première partie de son intervention à la figure de « Vattioni hébraïsant », le décrit ensuite dans son rôle de « professeur à l'Institut Oriental de Naples », ayant été lui-même son élève puis son successeur à la chaire de Langue et Littérature hébraïque biblique et médiévale. Il rappelle que les cours de Vattioni avaient pour objet le sémitique et l'hébreu biblique ; dans le premier domaine, il enseignait le

sudarabique, le phénico-punique, le palmyrénien, le nabatéen et l'araméen ancien. Le deuxième, à caractère principalement linguistique, était consacré à l'analyse lexicale et morphologique du texte massorétique, avec une attention particulière à *Esther*, au *Cantique*, à *Qohelet* et au *Livre des Rois*. Vattioni n'a jamais tenu en grande considération les manuscrits de Qumran, issus, à son idée, d'une reconstruction médiévale, et privilégiait les LXX, la Vulgate et Origène. De même, il n'eut que peu d'estime pour l'exégèse rabbinique, et considérait comme suspect tout ce qui venait d'Israël, notamment dans les domaines archéologique et épigraphique. Une exception dans ce désintérêt à l'égard du judaïsme en général est peut-être l'attention qu'il réserve à l'épigraphie judaïque de la Diaspora, dont il connaissait bien tous les *corpora*, attiré surtout par l'anthroponymie qu'il finit par affronter un peu dans tous les contextes du monde sémitique. Quant à la littérature biblique, il privilégie les témoignages sur la religion de Canaan et, puisant dans ses propres études sur la papyrologie et sur la littérature judaïco-hellénistique, il réserve dans ses cours un espace particulier à Philon de Byblos, aux papyrus de Zénon et à la *Lettre d'Aristée*.

4. Philologue bibliste

Moi-même, outre la rédaction de la note biographique de Vattioni et le recueil de sa bibliographie, j'ai illustré l'apport de Francesco Vattioni aux études bibliques. Le titre de mon exposé – « Philologie et parrhèsia » – fait allusion à la passion philologique qui parcourt tout le travail du chercheur, rythmé par l'acribie et la parrhèsia. En effet, la rigueur méthodologique de Vattioni avait comme contrepoint sa liberté de jugement bien connue et l'autonomie de sa démarche, d'une totale indépendance dans le mode d'exécution. Son tempérament, qui pourrait rappeler la parrhèsia de la tradition judéo-hellénistique, explique certains choix méthodologiques, soutenus avec franchise et résolution même quand il se trouvait dans une position minoritaire par rapport à d'autres branches scientifiques à base formaliste, très répandues à son époque.

Vattioni se présentait initialement comme exégète, mais son intérêt pour la Bible s'est très vite développé dans le sillon de la philologie, celui qui permettait une recherche minutieuse de la vérité textuelle. Formé à l'école d'Alberto Vaccari, il mûrit la conviction d'une nécessité de reconstruire l'ensemble de la transmission manuscrite, spécialement grecque et latine, du texte biblique. Cherchant souvent la confrontation méthodologique avec des chercheurs d'autres domaines scientifiques, il a l'idée des célèbres congrès interdisciplinaires « Sang et anthropologie » (1980-1991) dans lesquels le thème biblique était traité de différents points de vue, dans une optique d'ouverture à la recherche historique, anthropologique et littéraire.

Vattioni se consacre en qualité de commentateur aux livres de *Ben Sira*, *Job* et *Tobie*, mais il étudie aussi la *Genèse* et les *Proverbes*. Il a aussi été co-directeur de *La Sainte Bible* (1963) de S. Garofalo et réviseur de *La Sainte Bible* (1963) dirigée par E. Galbiati, A. Penna et P. Rossano pour réaliser, à la demande de la Conférence Épiscopale Italienne (CEI), une version officielle de la Bible en italien. On se souvient également de lui comme directeur de *La Bibbia di Gerusalemme* (1974), unissant au texte CEI les notes et les introductions de la *Bible de Jérusalem*.

Dans l'ouvrage qui l'a rendu célèbre, l'édition polyglotte de l'*Ecclésiastique* (1968), il compare les fragments bibliques hébraïques qui nous sont parvenus avec la forme textuelle des principales versions anciennes (LXX, Vulgate et version syriaque), qu'il dispose en synopse sur deux pages. L'intention de Vattioni était en effet de préparer un instrument permettant d'entreprendre le travail philologique à partir d'un regard d'ensemble sur les différents passages dans leurs différentes formes textuelles. Outre les manuscrits A-E, sa polyglotte tient compte des fragments qumraniens découverts dans les grottes 2 (2Q18) et 11 (11QPsa) ainsi que du rouleau de Masada.

Sa monographie sur le livre de *Job* (1996), dans laquelle Vattioni recueille le matériel préparatoire pour une édition critique, est inspirée du principe de la collation des sources manuscrites aux fins de la recherche de l'original. Son intérêt majeur était pour les sources de la tradition latine ; par là, il aspirait à remonter au texte grec pré-hexaplaire de *Job* et arriver enfin à l'*Ur-text*.

C'est dans cette esprit qu'il relit les phases principales de l'œuvre d'Origène, qui avait comblé les lacunes du grec sur la base de Théodotion ; il examine ensuite les manuscrits ayant conservé les signes hexaplaire, en particulier les trois de Tolède, Burgos et León (IX^e-XII^e s. ap. J.-C.) et étudie les gloses de quatre autres manuscrits espagnols post-hexaplaire – jamais utilisés dans des éditions critiques de *Job* – en se basant sur le *codex Legionensis Gothicus*.

Au livre de *Tobie*, Vattioni consacra initialement un essai monographique dans lequel il expose le *status quaestionis* et les perspectives de recherche. Il propose l'analyse philologique de chaque passage, signalant les problèmes textuels et présentant les deux formes principales du texte. Sa préférence pour la *Vetus Latina* le porte à pencher en faveur de la forme longue du grec (*codex Sinaiticus*), avec laquelle cette version concordait ; ainsi fera-t-il aussi pour la critique sur la base des fragments de Qumran (4Q196-200). Par la suite, Vattioni reviendra à *Tobie* pour en étudier la tradition textuelle latine dans le cadre espagnol ; il collationne les manuscrits de la *Vetus Latina*, se consacrant en particulier au *Speculum* augustinien, à la première *Bible d'Alcalá* et à la *Bible de Roda*, et publie le texte contenu dans ces manuscrits.

5. Un essai de Vattioni

Le volume propose également un essai de Vattioni lui-même, *Aspetti sacrificali nelle iscrizioni di Hatra* (1993), déjà paru parmi les « *Comptes rendus* » d'un des congrès « Sang et anthropologie ». Dans ce texte, il fait le point sur les connaissances fournies par les découvertes archéologiques sur les origines, la langue, la religion et la géographie d'Hatra. Il décrit également le matériel épigraphique parvenu en araméen, en latin, en grec et en palmyrénien et présente sa recherche sur le thème du sacrifice dans ces inscriptions. Le lexique du sacré est étudié non seulement à partir des différents objets votifs figurant dans ces inscriptions, mais aussi par rapport aux lieux, aux prêtres et aux instruments culturels et à d'autres aspects divers de la vie religieuse.

Le congrès a été couronné par l'inauguration de l'Archive de sources bibliographiques et documents sur le Proche-Orient ancien réalisée avec la bibliothèque personnelle de Vattioni, instrument précieux pour la poursuite des recherches dans son sillage dédié à sa mémoire.